

SYMMETRY OF COMPONENTS FOR RADIAL SOLUTIONS OF γ -LAPLACIAN SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT. In this paper, we give several sufficient conditions ensuring that any positive radial solution (u, v) of the following γ -Laplacian systems in the whole space \mathbb{R}^n has the components symmetry property $u \equiv v$

$$\begin{cases} -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2}\nabla u) = f(u, v) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \\ -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2}\nabla v) = g(u, v) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n. \end{cases}$$

Here $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$.

Thus, the systems will be reduced to a single γ -Laplacian equation:

$$-\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2}\nabla u) = f(u) \quad \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n.$$

Our proofs are based on suitable comparison principle arguments, combined with properties of radial solutions.

1. Introduction

In 2008, Li and Ma [10] studied the stationary Schrödinger system

$$(1.1) \quad \begin{cases} -\Delta u = u^p v^q & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \\ -\Delta v = u^q v^p & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \end{cases}$$

and obtained a components symmetry result:

Proposition 1.1. *Assume $n > \gamma$, $1 \leq p, q \leq \frac{n+2}{n-2}$ and $p + q = \frac{n+2}{n-2}$. Then any $(L^{\frac{2n}{n-2}}(\mathbb{R}^n))^2$ -positive solution pair (u, v) to (1.1) is radial symmetric, and hence $u \equiv v = a(b^2 + |x - x_0|^2)^{(2-n)/2}$ with $a, b > 0$ and $x_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$.*

The proof was achieved by the classification result in [4] and the method of moving planes based on the conformal invariant property. Afterwards, Lei and Li ([8]) studied the asymptotic radial symmetry and decay estimates of positive integrable solutions of

$$(1.2) \quad \begin{cases} -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2}\nabla u) = u^p v^q & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \\ -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2}\nabla v) = v^p u^q & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \end{cases}$$

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where $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$, and $p, q > 0$ and $p + q = \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$.

In 2012, Quittner and Souplet studied the more general Laplacian systems (cf. [12])

$$(1.3) \quad \begin{cases} -\Delta u = f(u, v) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \\ -\Delta v = g(u, v) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \end{cases}$$

under some ‘monotonicity’ assumption

$$(1.4) \quad (X - Y)[f(X, Y) - g(X, Y)] \leq 0, \quad X, Y \geq 0,$$

and also obtained further interesting components symmetry results.

Such class of systems appears in the modeling of Bose-Einstein condensates which is described by the static Schrödinger equations [11]. The physical and mathematic background can be see in [1] and [3] and other related references.

In this paper, we expect to generalize those components symmetry property in [12] to the γ -Laplacian systems

$$(1.5) \quad \begin{cases} -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2} \nabla u) = f(u, v) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \\ -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v) = g(u, v) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n. \end{cases}$$

Here $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$, and f, g satisfy (1.4) and other suitable growth assumptions on f, g . In what follows, we assume that $f, g : [0, \infty) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ are continuous.

For the γ -Laplacian equations with $\gamma \neq 2$, it seems difficult to handle the general classical solutions in view of its nonlinearity and degeneration. As a try for it, we only consider the radial classical solutions in this paper.

We say that a couple of nonnegative functions (u, v) is semitrivial if one component is equal to 0 and the other is not (with the convention $0^0 = 1$).

Theorem 1.2. *Let $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$, and $0 \leq p, t \leq \frac{(n-1)\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$. Assume that f, g satisfy (1.4), and for each $\eta > 0$, there exists $c = c(\eta) > 0$ such that*

$$(1.6) \quad f(u, v) \geq cu^p \quad \text{for all } v \geq \eta, u \geq 0,$$

and

$$(1.7) \quad g(u, v) \geq cv^t \quad \text{for all } u \geq \eta, v \geq 0.$$

Then any nonnegative radial solution (u, v) of (1.5) is either semitrivial or satisfies $u \equiv v$.

The following corollary is a special case of Theorem 1.2 concerning the system

$$(1.8) \quad \begin{cases} -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2} \nabla u) = u^p v^q & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n, \\ -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v) = v^t u^s & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n. \end{cases}$$

Here $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$, and $p, q, t, s \geq 0$.

Corollary 1.3. *Let $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$,*

$$(1.9) \quad q - t = s - p \geq 0,$$

and

$$(1.10) \quad 0 \leq p, t \leq \frac{(n-1)\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1.$$

Then any nonnegative radial solution (u, v) of (1.8) is either semitrivial or satisfies $u \equiv v$.

The following corollary is also a special case of Corollary 1.3 concerning the system (1.2).

Corollary 1.4. *Assume $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$, and $p + q = \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$. Then any positive radial solution (u, v) of (1.2) satisfies $u \equiv v$.*

Remark 1.1. (i) Comparing with the works of [5] and [10], the positive solutions of (1.2) with $\gamma \neq 2$ may have not the radial symmetry property even if the exponent $p + q$ satisfies the critical condition for Sobolev embedding. In fact, the γ -Laplacian equations have not the conformal invariant property except for some energy minimal solutions (ground states) (cf. [2]). Therefore, the classification result is hardly obtained.

(ii) When $u \equiv v$, (1.2) is reduced to a single equation. According to [8] and [9], the integrable solutions of this single equation decay with the fast rate when $|x| \rightarrow \infty$.

According to the conclusion pointed out in [12], the condition $q - t = s - p$ in (1.9) is necessary. In addition, the following theorem implies that the conditions (1.9) and (1.10) are not purely technical.

Theorem 1.5. *Let $n > \gamma$, $\gamma > 1$ and $p, q, t, s \geq 0$.*

(i) *Assume $q - t = s - p \geq 0$. Then any nonnegative solution (u, v) of (1.8) satisfies $u \geq v$ or $v \geq u$. Furthermore, if $p + q \leq \frac{(n-1)\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$, the nonnegative radial solution is semitrivial.*

(ii) *Let $q = t \geq \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$ and $p = s \geq 0$. Then there exists a positive solution (u, v) of (1.8), such that $u > v$ in \mathbb{R}^n . More precisely, we have $\lim_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} v(x) = 0$ and $u \equiv v + 1$. Moreover, if $q = s$, then the couple (v, u) is also a solution.*

(iii) *Let $p = t \geq \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1 - \frac{\gamma^2}{2(n-\gamma)}$ and $q = s = p - (\gamma - 1)$. Then there exists a positive function w such that the couple $(u, v) = (cw, w/c)$ solves (1.8) for any $c > 0$.*

2. Proof of Theorem 1.2

The properties of our mainly study of the radial solution $U(x) = u(r)$ for

$$(2.1) \quad -\Delta_\gamma U := -\operatorname{div}(|\nabla U|^{\gamma-2} \nabla U) \geq 0,$$

in our arguments is contained in the following lemma.

Lemma 2.1. *Let $U \geq 0$ belong to $C^2(\mathbb{R}^n)$. If $U(x) = u(r)$ is a radial solution of (2.1), then*

(i) $u'(r) \leq 0$ for $r > 0$;

(ii) $u(r) \geq l := \lim_{R \rightarrow \infty} u(R)$ for $r \geq 0$.

Proof. Clearly, if U solves (2.1), then u is a radial solution of

$$(2.2) \quad -(r^{n-1}|u'|^{\gamma-2}u')' \geq 0, \quad r \geq 0.$$

By integrating on both sides of (2.2) from 0 to R with $R > 0$, we obtain

$$|u'(R)|^{\gamma-2}u'(R) \leq 0,$$

and hence (i) is verified.

In addition, u is nonincreasing and nonnegative. Thus, l is well-defined and (ii) is proved. \square

The following lemma plays the key role in this paper. The idea of the proof comes from [12] which appears in Souplet's earlier paper (cf. Lemma 2.7 of [14]).

Lemma 2.2. *Assume that f, g satisfy*

$$(2.3) \quad f(X, Y) \geq g(X, Y), \quad 0 \leq X \leq Y.$$

If (u, v) is a nonnegative radial solution of (1.5) such that

$$(2.4) \quad \liminf_{R \rightarrow \infty} v(R) = 0,$$

then $v \leq u$ in \mathbb{R}^n .

Proof. Let $w = v - u$. By (2.3), we have

$$(2.5) \quad \Delta_\gamma v - \Delta_\gamma u = f - g \geq 0 \quad \text{in } \{w \geq 0\}.$$

We prepare a standard smooth replacement of the positive part function. Let $H \in C^2(\mathbb{R})$ be a function with the following properties

$$(2.6) \quad 0 \leq H(t) \leq t_+ = \max(t, 0) \text{ for } t \in \mathbb{R}, \quad H'(t), H''(t) > 0 \text{ for } t > 0.$$

We then set

$$h(R) := H(w)(R) \quad \text{for } R > 0.$$

Using (2.6), we have

$$(2.7) \quad 0 \leq h(R) \leq w_+(R) \leq v(R), \quad R > 0$$

Consequently, in view of (2.4), we have

$$\liminf_{r \rightarrow \infty} h(r) = 0.$$

It follows that there exists a sequence $R_i \rightarrow \infty$ such that $h'(R_i) < 0$.

According to Lemma 2.1(i) the integral mean value theorem, we get

$$|\partial_r u|^{\gamma-1} - |\partial_r v|^{\gamma-1} = (\gamma-1) \int_0^1 [t|\partial_r u| + (1-t)|\partial_r v|]^{\gamma-2} dt \partial_r w.$$

In view of $h'(R_i) < 0$, there holds

$$\begin{aligned}
 (2.8) \quad & \int_{\partial B_{R_i}} (|\partial_r u|^{\gamma-1} - |\partial_r v|^{\gamma-1}) H'(w) d\theta \\
 & = (\gamma - 1) |S^{n-1}| h'(R_i) R_i^{n-1} \int_0^1 [t|\partial_r u| + (1-t)|\partial_r v|]^{\gamma-2} dt \leq 0.
 \end{aligned}$$

On the other hand, when $\gamma > 2$, we have

$$(2.9) \quad |\nabla w|^\gamma \leq c(|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v - |\nabla u|^{\gamma-2} \nabla u) \nabla(v - u);$$

and when $1 < \gamma \leq 2$, we have

$$(2.10) \quad (|\nabla v| + |\nabla u|)^{\gamma-2} |\nabla w|^2 \leq c(|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v - |\nabla u|^{\gamma-2} \nabla u) \nabla(v - u).$$

Therefore,

(i) when $\gamma > 2$, by (2.8) and (2.9), we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 0 & \leq \int_{B_{R_i}} H''(w) |\nabla w|^\gamma dx \\
 & \leq \int_{B_{R_i}} H''(w) (|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v - |\nabla u|^{\gamma-2} \nabla u) \nabla(v - u) dx \\
 & = \int_{B_{R_i}} (|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v - |\nabla u|^{\gamma-2} \nabla u) \nabla H'(w) dx \\
 & = \int_{\partial B_{R_i}} (|\partial_r u|^{\gamma-1} - |\partial_r v|^{\gamma-1}) H'(w) ds - \int_{B_{R_i}} (\Delta_\gamma v - \Delta_\gamma u) H'(w) dx \\
 & \leq - \int_{B_{R_i}} (f - g) H'(w) dx \leq 0.
 \end{aligned}$$

(ii) When $1 < \gamma \leq 2$, by the same argument of (i), from (2.10) we also deduce that

$$0 \leq \int_{B_{R_i}} (|\nabla v| + |\nabla u|)^{\gamma-2} H''(w) |\nabla w|^2 dx \leq 0.$$

Therefore, for $\gamma > 1$, we always have $\nabla w = 0$ on \mathbb{R}^n , which implies that w is a constant. Going back to (2.7) and (2.4), we conclude that $w_+ = 0$, and hence $v \leq u$. \square

Proof of Theorem 1.2. In view of Lemma 2.2, it suffices to show that either (u, v) is semitrivial or

$$(2.11) \quad \liminf_{R \rightarrow \infty} u(R) = \liminf_{R \rightarrow \infty} v(R) = 0.$$

Assume, for instance, that the first limit does not hold. Then there exists $C > 0$ such that $u \geq C$ in \mathbb{R}^n by (ii) of Lemma 2.1. Thus, $-\Delta_\gamma v \geq \tilde{c}v^r$ in \mathbb{R}^n by assumption (1.7). According to the Liouville type results in [13], it is known that $v \equiv 0$ by virtue of $r \leq \frac{(n-1)\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$. The proof is complete. \square

Remark 2.1. A couple $(u, 0)$ is a semitrivial solution of (1.8) if and only if $r > 0$, and either $q > 0$ and u is a p -harmonic function (i.e., it solves $-\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2}\nabla u) = 0$), or $q = 0$, $n > \gamma$, $p \geq \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$, and u solves

$$-\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2}\nabla u) = u^p \quad \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n$$

(the existence is showed in [13]). A symmetric statement of course still holds for semitrivial solutions of the form $(0, v)$.

3. Proof of Theorem 1.5

First we state a Pohozaev type result.

Lemma 3.1. *If the boundary value problem*

$$(3.1) \quad \begin{cases} -\Delta_\gamma v = f(v) = (1+v)^p v^q, & x \in B_R, \\ v = 0, & x \in \partial B_R, \end{cases}$$

has positive radial solutions, then

$$\int_{B_R} v f(v) dx < \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} \int_{B_R} F(v) dx.$$

Here $B_R = B_R(0)$ and $F(v) = \int_0^v f(t) dt$.

Proof. Let v be the positive solution of the boundary value problem (3.1).

We multiply the equation in (3.3) by $(x \cdot \nabla v)$ and integrate over B_R . Using integration by parts, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} & - \int_{B_R} \Delta_\gamma v (x \cdot \nabla v) dx \\ &= - \int_{\partial B_R} (|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v \cdot \nu) (\nabla v \cdot x) ds + \int_{B_R} (|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} \nabla v) \nabla (x \cdot \nabla v) dx \\ &= -R \int_{\partial B_R} (|\nabla v|^{\gamma-2} |\frac{\partial v}{\partial \nu}|^2) ds + \int_{B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma dx + \frac{1}{\gamma} \int_{B_R} x \cdot \nabla (|\nabla v|^\gamma) dx \\ &= -\frac{n-\gamma}{\gamma} \int_{B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma dx + \frac{1-\gamma}{\gamma} R \int_{\partial B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma ds. \end{aligned}$$

The last equality is deduced by the radial symmetry of v . In addition, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{B_R} f(v) (x \cdot \nabla v) dx &= \int_{B_R} x \cdot \nabla F(v) dx \\ &= R \int_{\partial B_R} F(v) ds - n \int_{B_R} F(v) dx \\ &= -n \int_{B_R} F(v) dx \end{aligned}$$

by using $F(v) = 0$ on ∂B_R . Thus,

$$-\frac{n-\gamma}{\gamma} \int_{B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma dx + \frac{1-\gamma}{\gamma} R \int_{\partial B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma ds = -n \int_{B_R} F(v) dx.$$

Noting $\gamma > 1$, we obtain

$$\frac{1-\gamma}{\gamma}R \int_{\partial B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma ds < 0,$$

and hence

$$\frac{n-\gamma}{\gamma} \int_{B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma dx < n \int_{B_R} F(v) dx.$$

On the other hand, multiply the equation in (3.3) by v . Integrating by parts, we obtain

$$\int_{B_R} v f(v) dx = - \int_{B_R} (\Delta_\gamma v) v dx = \int_{B_R} |\nabla v|^\gamma dx.$$

Combining with the result above, we complete the proof easily. □

Proof of Theorem 1.5. (i) In view of Lemma 2.2, it is sufficient to check that either $\lim_{R \rightarrow \infty} \inf u(R) = 0$ or $\lim_{R \rightarrow \infty} \inf v(R) = 0$, which implies $u \leq v$ or $v \leq u$ by Lemma 2.2. If these were not the case, then $u, v \geq C > 0$ in \mathbb{R}^n by (ii) of Lemma 2.1. Thus, $-\Delta_\gamma u \geq c > 0$ in \mathbb{R}^n . Namely,

$$-R^{1-n}(R^{n-1}|u'|^{\gamma-2}u')' \geq c.$$

Multiplying by R^{n-1} and integrating from 0 to R , we see that

$$(3.2) \quad |u'(R)|^{\gamma-2}u'(R) \leq -cR \quad \text{for } R > 0.$$

Noting (i) of Lemma 2.1, we get $-u' > 0$ which implies

$$|u'(R)|^{\gamma-2}u'(R) = -(-u'(R))^{\gamma-1}.$$

Combining with (3.2) yields

$$u'(R) \leq -(cR)^{\frac{1}{\gamma-1}} \quad \text{for } R > 0.$$

Integrating from r_0 to r , we get

$$u(r) \leq u(r_0) - \frac{\gamma-1}{\gamma} c^{\frac{1}{\gamma-1}} r^{\frac{\gamma}{\gamma-1}}.$$

When r is sufficiently large, u is negative. It is a contradiction.

Moreover, without loss of generality, we assume $u \leq v$. Then from (1.8) it follows that

$$-\operatorname{div}(|\nabla u|^{\gamma-2}\nabla u) \geq u^{p+q} \quad \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n.$$

According to the Liouville type results in [13], we get $u \equiv 0$ in view of $p+q \leq \frac{(n-1)\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$.

(ii) We look for a solution such that $u = v + 1$. Then system (1.8) becomes equivalent to the single equation

$$(3.3) \quad -\Delta_\gamma v = f(v) = (1+v)^p v^q, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^n.$$

Let $F(t) = \int_0^t f(\tau) d\tau$. We claim that

$$(3.4) \quad t f(t) - \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} F(t) \geq 0, \quad t \geq 0.$$

In fact, in view of (3.3) and integrating by parts, we have

$$\begin{aligned} F(t) &= \int_0^t (1+\tau)^p \tau^q d\tau \\ &= \frac{t^{q+1}(1+t)^p}{q+1} - \int_0^t \frac{\tau^{q+1}}{q+1} d((1+\tau)^p) \\ &= \frac{1}{q+1} [(1+t)^p t^{q+1} - \int_0^t p(1+\tau)^{p-1} \tau^{q+1} d\tau] \\ &\leq \frac{1}{q+1} t f(t). \end{aligned}$$

Since $q \geq \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$, we obtain

$$t f(t) \geq (q+1)F(t) \geq \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} F(t).$$

Therefore, (3.4) is verified.

According to Lemma 3.1, we know the boundary value problem (3.1) does not admit any positive solution by noting (3.4).

Next, consider the following initial value problem

$$(3.5) \quad \begin{cases} -t^{1-n}(t^{n-1}|v'|^{\gamma-2}v')' = f(v), & t > 0, \\ v(0) = 1, v'(0) = 0. \end{cases}$$

Clearly, one of the following two cases holds

Case 1: $v > 0, v' \leq 0$ for all $t > 0$;

Case 2: v has the first zero R_* .

We claim that Case 2 does not happen, since this would contradict the above nonexistence statement on the ball B_{R_*} . We conclude that problem (3.5) and hence (3.3), admits a positive entire solution v which is decaying to zero. More precisely, according to the results in [6] and [7], v decays fast with the rate $\frac{n-\gamma}{\gamma-1}$ when $q = \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$ and slowly with rate $\frac{\gamma}{q-(\gamma-1)}$ when $q > \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$.

(iii) Let $(u, v) = (cw, c^{-1}w)$ with c a positive constant. Then system (1.8) becomes equivalent to

$$-\Delta_\gamma w = w^{2p-\gamma+1}.$$

According to the existence results in [13], we see that this equation admits positive solutions by virtue of $2p - \gamma + 1 \geq \frac{n\gamma}{n-\gamma} - 1$. \square

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