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Value-Distribution of L-Functions

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Contents

Preface

L-functions are important objects in modern number theory. They are generating functions formed out of local data associated with either an arithmetic object or with an automorphic form. They can be attached to smooth projective varieties defined over number fields, to irreducible (complex or p-adic) representations of the Galois group of a number field, to a cusp form or to an irreducible cuspidal automorphic representation. All the L-functions have in common that they can be described by an Euler product, i.e., a product taken over prime numbers. In view of the unique prime factorization of integers L-functions also have a Dirichlet series representation. The famous Riemann zeta-function

$$\zeta(s) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^s} = \prod_{p \text{ prime}} \left(1 - \frac{1}{p^s}\right)^{-1}$$

may be regarded as the prototype. L-functions encode in their value-distribution information on the underlying arithmetic or algebraic structure that is often not obtainable by elementary or algebraic methods. For instance, Dirichlet's class number formula gives information on the deviation from unique prime factorization in the ring of integers of quadratic number fields by the values of certain Dirichlet L-functions $L(s, \chi)$ at $s = 1$. In particular, the distribution of zeros of L-functions is of special interest with respect to many problems in multiplicative number theory. A first example is the Riemann hypothesis on the non-vanishing of the Riemann zeta-function in the right half of the critical strip and its impact on the distribution of prime numbers. Another example are L-functions $L(s, E)$ attached to elliptic curves E defined over $\mathbb{Q}$. The yet unproved conjecture of Birch and Swinnerton-Dyer claims that $L(s, E)$ has a zero at $s = 1$ whose order is equal to the rank of the Mordell-Weil group of the elliptic curve E.

These notes present recent results in the value-distribution theory of such L-functions with an emphasis on the phenomenon of universality. The starting point of this theory is Bohr's achievement at the first half of the twentieth

century. He proved denseness results and first limit theorems for the values of the Riemann zeta-function. Maybe the most remarkable result concerning the value-distribution of $\zeta(s)$ is Voronin's universality theorem from 1975, which roughly states that any non-vanishing analytic function can be approximated uniformly by certain shifts of the zeta-function in the critical strip. More precisely: *let* $0 < r < \frac{1}{4}$ *and suppose that* $g(s)$ *is a non-vanishing continuous function on the disc* $|s| \leq r$ *which is analytic in its interior. Then, for any* $\epsilon > 0$*, there exists a real number* τ *such that*

$$\max_{|s|\leq r} \left| \zeta\left(s + \frac{3}{4} + \mathrm{i}\tau\right) - g(s) \right| < \epsilon;$$

moreover, the set of these τ *has positive lower density:*

$$\liminf_{T\to\infty} \frac{1}{T} \operatorname{meas} \left\{ \tau \in [0,T] : \max_{|s|\leq r} \left| \zeta\left(s + \frac{3}{4} + \mathrm{i}\tau\right) - g(s) \right| < \epsilon \right\} > 0.$$

This is a remarkable property! We say that $\zeta(s)$ is *universal* since it allows uniform approximation of a large class of functions. Voronin's universality theorem, in a spectacular way, indicates that Riemann's zeta-function is a transcendental function; clearly, rational functions cannot be universal. In some literature the validity of the Riemann hypothesis for abelian varieties (proved by Hasse for elliptic curves and by Weil in the general case) is regarded as evidence for the truth of Riemann's hypothesis for $\zeta(s)$. However, the zeta-function of an abelian variety is a rational function and so its value-distribution is of a rather different type.

The Linnik–Ibragimov conjecture asserts that any Dirichlet series (which has a *sufficiently rich* value-distribution) is universal. Meanwhile we know quite many universal Dirichlet series; for instance, Dirichlet L-functions (Voronin, 1975), Dedekind zeta-functions (Reich, 1980), Lerch zeta-functions (Laurinčikas, 1997), and L-functions associated with newforms (Laurinčikas, Matsumoto and Steuding, 2003). One aim of these notes is to prove an extension of Voronin's universality theorem for a large class of L-functions which covers (at least conjecturally) all known L-functions of number-theoretical significance.

These notes are organized as follows. In the introduction, we give an overview on the value-distribution theory of the classical Riemann zeta-function and Dirichlet L-functions; also we touch some allied zeta-functions which we will not consider in detail in the following chapters. In Chap. 2, we introduce a class $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}$ of Dirichlet series, satisfying certain analytic and arithmetic axioms. The members of this class are the main actors in the sequel. Roughly speaking, an L-function in $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}$ has a polynomial Euler product and satisfies some hypothesis which may be regarded as some kind of prime number theorem; besides, we require analytic continuation to the left of the half-plane of absolute convergence for the associated Dirichlet series in addition with some growth condition. The axioms defining $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}$ are kept quite

general and therefore they may appear to be rather abstract and technical; however, as we shall discuss later for many examples (in Chaps. 6, 12 and 13), they hold (or at least they are expected to hold) for all L-functions of number theoretical interest. This abstract setting has the advantage that we can derive a rather general universality theorem.

Our proof of universality, in the main part, relies on Bagchi's probabilistic approach from 1981. For the sake of completeness we briefly present in Chap. 3 some basic facts from probability theory and measure theory. In Chap. 4, we prove along the lines of Laurinčikas' extension of Bagchi's method a limit theorem (in the sense of weakly convergent probability measures) for functions in the class $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}$. In the following chapter we give the proof of the main result, a universality theorem for L-functions in $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}$. The proof depends on the limit theorem of the previous chapter and the so-called positive density method, recently introduced by Laurinčikas and Matsumoto to tackle L-functions attached to cusp forms. Furthermore, we discuss the phenomenon of discrete universality; here the attribute *discrete* means that the shifts τ are taken from arithmetic progressions. This concept of universality was introduced by Reich in 1980.

In Chap. 6, we introduce the Selberg class $\mathcal{S}$ consisting of Dirichlet series with Euler product and a functional equation of Riemann-type (and a bit more). It is a folklore conjecture that the Selberg class consists of all automorphic L-functions. We study basic facts about $\mathcal{S}$ and discuss the main conjectures, in particular, the far-reaching Selberg conjectures on primitive elements. We shall see that the class $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}$ fits rather well into the setting of the Selberg class $\mathcal{S}$ (especially with respect to Selberg's conjectures). Hence, our general universality theorem extends to the Selberg class, unconditionally for many of the classical L-function and conditionally to all elements of $\mathcal{S}$ subject to some widely believed but rather deep conjectures. However, the Selberg class is too small with respect to universality; for instance, a Dirichlet L-function to an imprimitive character does not lie in the Selberg class (by lack of an appropriate functional equation) but it is known to be universal. Furthermore, some important L-functions are only conjectured to lie in the Selberg class, and, in spite of this, for some of them we can derive universality unconditionally.

In the following chapter, we consider the value-distribution of Dirichlet series $\mathcal{L}(s)$ with functional equation in the complex plane. Following Levinson's approach from the 1970s, we shall prove asymptotic formulae for the c-values of $\mathcal{L}$, i.e., roots of the equation $\mathcal{L}(s) = c$, and give applications in Nevanlinna theory. In particular, we give an alternative proof of the Riemann–von Mangoldt formula for the elements in the Selberg class.

The main themes of Chap. 8 are almost periodicity and the Riemann hypothesis. Universality has an interesting feedback to classical problems. Bohr observed that the Riemann hypothesis for Dirichlet L-functions associated with non-principal characters is equivalent to almost periodicity in the right half of the critical strip. Applying Voronin's universality theorem, Bagchi was able to extend this result to the zeta-function in proving that if

the Riemann zeta-function can approximate itself uniformly in the sense of Voronin's theorem, then Riemann's hypothesis is true, and vice versa. We sketch an extension of Bagchi's theorem to other L-functions.

Chapter 9 deals with the problem of effectivity. The known proofs of universality are ineffective, giving neither bounds for the first approximating shift τ nor for their density (with the exception of particular results due to Garunkštis, Good, and Laurinčikas). We give explicit upper bounds for the density of universality; more precisely, we prove upper bounds for the frequency with which a certain class of target functions (analytic isomorphisms) can be uniformly approximated. Moreover, we apply effective results from the theory of inhomogeneous diophantine approximation to prove several explicit estimates for the value-distribution in the half-plane of absolute convergence.

In Chap. 10, we discuss further applications of universality, most of them classical, e.g., an extension of Bohr's and Voronin's results concerning the value-distribution inside the critical strip, and the functional independence which covers Ostrowski's solution of the Hilbert problem on the hyper-transcendence of the zeta-function and some of its generalizations. Here a function is called hyper-transcendental, if it does not satisfy any algebraic differential equation. Further, we study the value-distribution of linear combinations of (strongly) universal Dirichlet series. A subtle consequence of this *strong* concept of universality, and a big contrast to L-functions, can be found in the distribution of zeros off the critical line. Very likely a (universal) Dirichlet series satisfying a functional equation of Riemann-type has either *many* zeros to the right of the critical line (as a generic Dirichlet series with periodic coefficients) or *none* (as it is expected for L-functions). This seems to be the heart of many secrets in the value-distribution theory of Dirichlet series.

Chapter 11 deals with Dirichlet series associated with periodic arithmetical functions. In general, these functions do not have an Euler product but they are additively related to Dirichlet L-functions. Consequently, they share certain properties with L-functions, e.g., a functional equation similar to the one for Riemann's zeta-function. We prove universality for a large class of these Dirichlet series; in contrast to L-functions they can approximate uniformly analytic functions having zeros (provided their Dirichlet coefficients are not multiplicative). Moreover, we study joint universality for Hurwitz zeta-functions with rational parameters.

We conclude with joint universality; here *joint* stands for simultaneous uniform approximation. In Chap. 12, we prove a theorem which reduces joint universality for L-functions in $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}$ to a denseness property in a related function space. Of course, we cannot have joint universality for any set of L-functions; for example, $\zeta(s)$ and $\zeta(s)^2$ cannot approximate any given pair of admissible target functions simultaneously. However, we shall prove that in some instances twists of $\mathcal{L} \in \tilde{\mathcal{S}}$ with pairwise non-equivalent characters fulfill this condition (e.g., Dirichlet L functions). In the following chapter we present several further applications. For instance, we prove joint universality for Artin

L-functions (which lie in the Selberg class if and only if the deep Artin conjecture is true). This universality theorem holds unconditionally despite the fact that Artin L-functions might have infinitely many poles in their strip of universality; this was first proved by Bauer in 2003 by a tricky argument.

At the end of these notes an appendix on the history of the general phenomenon of universality in analysis is given. It is known that universality is a quite regularly appearing phenomenon in limit processes, but among all these universal objects only universal Dirichlet series are explicitly known. At the end an index and a list of the notations and axioms which were used are given.

Value-distribution theory for L-functions with emphasis on aspects of universality was treated in the monographs of Karatsuba and Voronin [166] and Laurinčikas [186]. However, after the publication of these books, many new results and applications were discovered; we refer the reader to the surveys of Laurinčikas [196] and of Matsumoto [242] for some of the progress made in the meantime. The content of this book forms an extract of the authors habilitation thesis written at Frankfurt University in 2003. We have added Chaps. 12 and 13 on joint universality and its applications as well as several remarks and comments concerning the progress obtained in the meantime. Unfortunately, we could not include the most current contributions as, for example, the promising work [245] of Mauclaire which relates universality with almost periodicity.

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