

Equidistribution of Hecke eigenforms on the Hilbert modular varieties

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Received 10 October 2006; revised 19 November 2006

Available online 12 February 2007

Communicated by Wenzhi Luo

Abstract

Let F be a totally real number field with ring of integers \mathcal{O} , and let $\Gamma = SL(2, \mathcal{O})$ be the Hilbert modular group. Given the orthonormal basis of Hecke eigenforms in $S_{2k}(\Gamma)$, one can associate a probability measure $d\mu_k$ on the Hilbert modular variety $\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$. We prove that $d\mu_k$ tends to the invariant measure on $\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$ weakly as $k \rightarrow \infty$. This generalizes Luo's result [W. Luo, Equidistribution of Hecke eigenforms on the modular surface, Proc. Amer. Math. Soc. 131 (2003) 21–27] for the case $F = \mathbb{Q}$.

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Keywords: Hilbert modular form; Hecke eigenform; Bergman kernel

1. Introduction

Let F be a totally real number field of degree n over \mathbb{Q} with ring of integers \mathcal{O} and $\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \dots, \sigma_n$ be all the real embeddings of F . Let $\Gamma = SL(2, \mathcal{O})$ be the Hilbert modular group which acts discontinuously on the product of n upper half planes \mathbb{H}^n in the following way: For $\gamma = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in \Gamma$, and $z = (z_1, \dots, z_n) \in \mathbb{H}^n$, we define $\gamma z = (\gamma_1 z_1, \dots, \gamma_n z_n)$ where

$$\gamma_i = \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_i(a) & \sigma_i(b) \\ \sigma_i(c) & \sigma_i(d) \end{pmatrix}, \quad \gamma_i z_i = \frac{\sigma_i(a)z_i + \sigma_i(b)}{\sigma_i(c)z_i + \sigma_i(d)} \quad (1 \leq i \leq n).$$

Remark. We may also identify Γ with its image in $SL(2, \mathbb{R})^n$ via $\gamma \in \Gamma$, $\gamma = (\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n) \in SL(2, \mathbb{R})^n$.

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It is well known that Γ has finite co-volume (see [Fr]), i.e.

$$\text{vol}(\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n) = \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \frac{dx dy}{(Ny)^2} < \infty,$$

where $z = (x_1 + iy_1, \dots, x_n + iy_n) \in \mathbb{H}^n$, $dx = dx_1 \cdots dx_n$, $dy = dy_1 \cdots dy_n$, and $Ny = y_1 \cdots y_n$.

Denote by $S_{2k}(\Gamma)$ ($k \in \mathbb{N}$, $k \geq 2$) the space of Hilbert modular cusp forms of weight $(2k, \dots, 2k)$, i.e. the space of holomorphic functions $f(z)$ on \mathbb{H}^n such that

(1) for $\gamma = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in \Gamma$, $f(\gamma z) = N(cz + d)^{2k} f(z)$, where for $z = (z_1, \dots, z_n) \in \mathbb{H}^n$,

$$N(cz + d) = \prod_{i=1}^n (\sigma_i(c)z_i + \sigma_i(d)),$$

(2) $f(z)$ vanishes at all the cusps of Γ (see [Ga] or [Fr]).

Let

$$d\mu = \frac{1}{\text{vol}(\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n)} \frac{dx dy}{(Ny)^2}.$$

For f and g in $S_{2k}(\Gamma)$, we define the (normalized) Petersson inner product by

$$\langle f, g \rangle = \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} f(z) \overline{g(z)} (Ny)^{2k} d\mu.$$

It is well known that $S_{2k}(\Gamma)$ is a finite dimensional Hilbert space. Furthermore, if we let $J_k = \dim_{\mathbb{C}} S_{2k}(\Gamma)$, then it was shown by Shimizu [Sh] (using the Selberg trace formula) that

$$J_k = \frac{\text{vol}(\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n)}{(4\pi)^n} (2k-1)^n + O(1) \quad (1.1)$$

as $k \rightarrow \infty$.

One expects the following mass equidistribution conjecture on the Hilbert modular variety $\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$ should be true:

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \max_{1 \leq i \leq J_k} \left| \int_A (Ny)^{2k} |f_{i,k}(z)|^2 d\mu - \int_A d\mu \right| = 0 \quad (1.2)$$

where $A \subset \Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$ is compact and $\{f_{i,k}\}_{i=1}^{J_k}$ is the orthonormal Hecke basis of $S_{2k}(\Gamma)$. For $n=1$ (i.e. $\Gamma = \Gamma(1)$), this is an analogue of quantum unique ergodicity conjecture, formulated by Rudnick and Sarnak [RS].

This conjecture is still out of reach at the present. However, Luo [Lu] established this conjecture on the average and Lau [La] generalized Luo's result to the arithmetic surface $\Gamma_0(N) \backslash \mathbb{H}$. The purpose of this paper is to generalize Luo's and Lau's results to the Hilbert modular varieties (Theorem 1 and Corollary 2).

Let $\{f_{i,k}\}_{i=1}^{J_k}$ be an orthonormal basis of $S_{2k}(\Gamma)$. Set

$$d\mu_k = \frac{1}{J_k} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{J_k} |f_{i,k}(z)|^2 \right) (Ny)^{2k} d\mu.$$

Theorem 1. For any compact subset $A \subset \Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$ and any $0 < \epsilon < 1$, we have

$$\int_A d\mu_k = \int_A d\mu + O_{\epsilon,A}((k^{-1+\epsilon})^n)$$

as $k \rightarrow \infty$.

Remark 1. The key ingredients in [Lu] and [La] are the Bergman kernel for the Hecke operator and the Petersson trace formula, respectively. Our approach is using the Bergman kernel on $\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$.

Remark 2. Luo [Lu] proved a uniform result for all measurable subsets A . In our Theorem 1, the result depends on the compact subset A . But our decay rate is sharper than in [Lu].

Some properties of Γ . We say that an element γ (\neq identity) of Γ is *elliptic* (respectively *parabolic* and *hyperbolic*) if all the γ_i are elliptic (respectively parabolic and hyperbolic) in the usual sense (see [Iw]). If γ (\neq identity) is not of above types, we say that γ is *mixed*. A point z in \mathbb{H}^n is called an *elliptic point* if it is fixed by an elliptic element in Γ . A point κ in $\overline{\mathbb{R}}^n$ (where $\overline{\mathbb{R}} = \mathbb{R} \cup \{\infty\}$) is called a *cusp* if it is fixed by a parabolic element in Γ .

Proposition 1. (See [Sh, Theorem 6].) The number of the Γ -inequivalent elliptic points of Γ is finite.

Proposition 2. (See [Sh, Lemma 15].) Let $e_1, \dots, e_s \in \mathbb{H}^n$ be a complete representatives of Γ -inequivalent elliptic points of Γ . Then the union of $\Gamma_{e_i} \setminus \{1\}$ ($1 \leq i \leq s$) forms a complete representatives of non-conjugate elliptic elements in Γ , where $\Gamma_{e_i} = \{\gamma \in \Gamma: \gamma e_i = e_i\}$ ($1 \leq i \leq s$).

Since Γ_{e_i} is a discrete subgroup of a compact subgroup, Γ_{e_i} is a finite subgroup. Hence we have

Lemma 1. There are only finitely many elliptic conjugacy classes in Γ .

2. Bergman kernel

For $k \in \mathbb{N}$, $k \geq 2$ and $z = (z_1, \dots, z_n)$, $w = (w_1, \dots, w_n) \in \mathbb{H}^n$, we define the Bergman kernel by

$$B_k(z, w) = \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} N(\gamma z - \overline{w})^{-2k} j(\gamma, z)^{-2k}$$

where $N(\gamma z - \overline{w}) = \prod_{i=1}^n (\sigma_i(\gamma) z_i - \overline{w}_i)$ and $j(\gamma, z) = N(cz + d)$, $\gamma = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$.

Proposition 3.

- (1) $B_k(z, w)$ converges absolutely and uniformly for (z, w) in compact subsets of $\mathbb{H}^n \times \mathbb{H}^n$.
 (2) For each fixed $w \in \mathbb{H}^n$, $B_k(z, w) \in S_{2k}(\Gamma)$ (as a function of z).

Proof. The proof can be found in [Ga, 1.14] or [Fr, Chapter II]. \square

Proposition 4. If $f \in S_{2k}(\Gamma)$, then

$$\begin{aligned} f(w) &= \left(\frac{2k-1}{4\pi} \right)^n \frac{(2i)^{2kn}}{2} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} f(z) \overline{B_k(z, w)} (Ny)^{2k} \frac{dx dy}{(Ny)^2} \\ &= \left(\frac{2k-1}{4\pi} \right)^n \frac{(2i)^{2kn}}{2} \text{vol}(\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n) \langle f, B_k(\cdot, w) \rangle \end{aligned}$$

where $z = (x_1 + iy_1, \dots, x_n + iy_n) \in \mathbb{H}^n$, $w \in \mathbb{H}^n$.

Proof. See [Ga, 1.14] or [Fr, Chapter II]. \square

For convenience, denote by

$$C_k^{-1} = \left(\frac{2k-1}{4\pi} \right)^n \frac{(2i)^{2kn}}{2} \text{vol}(\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n) \quad (2.1)$$

and note that $C_k = \overline{C_k}$ when $k \geq 2$.

For $k \in \mathbb{N}$, $\gamma \in \Gamma$ and $z = (z_1, \dots, z_n) \in \mathbb{H}^n$, let

$$h(\gamma, z) = N(z - \bar{z})^2 N(\gamma z - \bar{z})^{-2} j(\gamma, z)^{-2}$$

and

$$h_k(\gamma, z) = (h(\gamma, z))^k = N(z - \bar{z})^{2k} N(\gamma z - \bar{z})^{-2k} j(\gamma, z)^{-2k}.$$

Lemma 2. $|h_k(\gamma, z)| \leq 1$ for all $z \in \mathbb{H}^n$ and $\gamma \in \Gamma$. Moreover, $|h_k(\gamma, z)| = 1$ if and only if $\gamma = \pm 1$ or γ is elliptic and z is its fixed point.

Proof. It suffices to prove when $n = 1$. By definition,

$$|h_k(\gamma, z)| = \left| \frac{z - \bar{z}}{\gamma z - \bar{z}} \cdot \frac{1}{cz + d} \right|^{2k}$$

where $\gamma = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in \Gamma$. Let $\gamma z = z' = x' + iy'$ and $z = x + iy$. Then

$$\left| \frac{z - \bar{z}}{\gamma z - \bar{z}} \cdot \frac{1}{cz + d} \right| = \frac{y^{1/2}}{\left| \frac{(x' - x) + i(y + y')}{2i} \right|} \left(\frac{y}{|cz + d|^2} \right)^{1/2}$$

$$= \frac{y^{1/2}(y')^{1/2}}{\left| \frac{y+y'}{2} + i \frac{x-x'}{2} \right|} \leq \frac{y^{1/2}(y')^{1/2}}{\frac{y+y'}{2}} \leq 1.$$

The equality holds if and only if $x = x'$ and $y = y'$, i.e. $\gamma z = z$. Hence the equality holds if and only if $\gamma = \pm 1$ or γ is elliptic and z is its fixed point. \square

Lemma 3. For each fixed $k \geq 2$, $\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} h_k(\gamma, z)$ converges absolutely and uniformly on any compact subset of \mathbb{H}^n .

Proof. Note that

$$\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} h_k(\gamma, z) = N(z - \bar{z})^{2k} B_k(z, z) \quad (2.2)$$

and then the result follows from Proposition 3. \square

Lemma 4. For any $M \in \Gamma$, we have

$$h_k(M^{-1}\gamma M, z) = h_k(\gamma, Mz).$$

Proof. By a simple computation or see [Fr]. \square

3. Proof of Theorem 1

Before we prove the theorem, we make the following observation.

Since $B_k(z, w)$ is a cusp form in z (by Proposition 3), we have

$$\begin{aligned} B_k(z, w) &= \sum_{i=1}^{J_k} \langle B_k(\cdot, w), f_{i,k} \rangle f_{i,k}(z) \\ &= C_k \sum_{i=1}^{J_k} \overline{f_{i,k}(w)} f_{i,k}(z) \quad (\text{by Proposition 4}). \end{aligned}$$

Let $w = z$, then we obtain the identity

$$B_k(z, z) = C_k \sum_{i=1}^{J_k} |f_{i,k}(z)|^2, \quad (3.1)$$

where C_k is defined in (2.1).

Proof of Theorem 1. Let $\chi_A(z)$ denote the characteristic function of A on $\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$. One can extend it (with the same notation) to \mathbb{H}^n as a Γ -invariant function.

By (3.1) and (2.2),

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_A d\mu_k &= \frac{1}{J_k C_k} \int_A B_k(z, z) (Ny)^{2k} d\mu \\
&= \frac{1}{(2i)^{2kn} J_k C_k} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu \\
&= \frac{1}{(2i)^{2kn} J_k C_k} \left[\sum_{\gamma = \pm 1} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu \right. \\
&\quad + \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma, \gamma \text{ is elliptic}} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu \\
&\quad \left. + \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) \left(\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma, \gamma \neq \pm 1, \gamma \text{ is not elliptic}} h_k(\gamma, z) \right) d\mu \right].
\end{aligned}$$

We estimate the above three summation of integrals in the following cases.

Case 1. $\gamma = \pm 1$.

$$\int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu = \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) d\mu = \mu(A).$$

Case 2. For $\gamma \in \Gamma$ elliptic, let

$$\Gamma_\gamma = \{M \in \Gamma: M\gamma = \gamma M\} \quad (\text{the centralizer of } \gamma \text{ in } \Gamma)$$

and

$$[\gamma] = \{M^{-1}\gamma M: M \in \Gamma\}.$$

Also let Λ be a set of complete representatives of elliptic conjugate classes in Γ .

Remark. $|\Lambda| < \infty$ by Lemma 1.

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma, \gamma \text{ is elliptic}} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu &= \sum_{\gamma \in \Lambda} \sum_{\gamma' \in [\gamma]} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma', z) d\mu \\
&= \sum_{\gamma \in \Lambda} \sum_{M \in \Gamma_\gamma \backslash \Gamma} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(M^{-1}\gamma M, z) d\mu.
\end{aligned}$$

Using Lemma 4 and unfolding, we have

$$\sum_{M \in \Gamma_\gamma \backslash \Gamma} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(M^{-1}\gamma M, z) d\mu = \int_{\Gamma_\gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= \frac{1}{|\Gamma_\gamma|} \int_{\mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu \\
&= \frac{1}{|\Gamma_\gamma|} \int_{\mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) \prod_{i=1}^n h_{k,i}(\gamma_i, z_i) d\mu \\
&\leq \frac{1}{|\Gamma_\gamma|} \frac{1}{\text{vol}(\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n)} \prod_{i=1}^n \int_{\mathbb{H}} h_{k,i}(\gamma_i, z_i) \frac{dx_i dy_i}{y_i^2}
\end{aligned}$$

where

$$h_{k,i}(\gamma_i, z_i) = (z_i - \bar{z}_i)^{2k} (\gamma_i z_i - \bar{z}_i)^{-2k} j(\gamma_i, z_i)^{-2k}.$$

Remark. $h_{k,i}(M^{-1}\gamma_i M, z_i) = h_{k,i}(\gamma_i, M z_i)$ for any $M \in SL(2, \mathbb{R})$.

Hence we may assume that each γ_i is of the form

$$\begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta_i & \sin \theta_i \\ -\sin \theta_i & \cos \theta_i \end{pmatrix}, \quad \theta_i \neq 0, \pi.$$

For convenience, we drop the subscripts i in γ_i, z_i, θ_i , etc.

Now we make change of variables by using the *Cayley transform*

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{H} &\rightarrow D \text{ (unit disc)} \\
z &\mapsto w = \frac{z-i}{z+i}
\end{aligned}$$

and then use the polar coordinates $w = \rho e^{i\varphi}$ of the unit disc. It yields

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_{\mathbb{H}} |h_{k,i}(\gamma, z)| \frac{dx dy}{y^2} &= 4 \int_0^{2\pi} \int_0^1 \frac{(1-\rho^2)^{2k-2}}{|1-e^{i\beta}\rho^2|^{2k}} \rho d\rho d\varphi \\
&= 4\pi \int_0^1 \frac{(1-t)^{2k-2}}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|^{2k}} dt \quad (\text{where } \beta = 2\theta \neq 0, 2\pi).
\end{aligned}$$

- When $0 \leq t \leq k^{-1+\epsilon}$ ($0 < \epsilon < 1$), it is easy to see that $\frac{1-t}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|} \leq 1$. Hence

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_0^{k^{-1+\epsilon}} \frac{(1-t)^{2k-2}}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|^{2k}} dt &= \int_0^{k^{-1+\epsilon}} \left(\frac{1-t}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|} \right)^{2k-1} \frac{1}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|^2} dt \\
&\leq \int_0^{k^{-1+\epsilon}} \frac{1}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|^2} dt \ll k^{-1+\epsilon}.
\end{aligned}$$

• When $k^{-1+\epsilon} \leq t \leq 1$, we have $(1-t)^2 < \frac{1}{4}$ for k sufficiently large and then $\frac{2t}{(1-t)^2} \geq \frac{2k^{-1+\epsilon}}{4} = \frac{1}{2}k^{-1+\epsilon}$. So

$$\frac{1-t}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|} = \frac{1}{|1+\frac{2t}{(1-t)^2}(1-\cos\beta)|^{1/2}} \ll (1+k^{-1+\epsilon})^{-1/2}.$$

Hence

$$\int_{k^{-1+\epsilon}}^1 \frac{(1-t)^{2k-2}}{|1-e^{i\beta}t|^{2k}} dt \ll [(1+k^{-1+\epsilon})^{-1/2}]^{2k-2} = (1+k^{-1+\epsilon})^{-k+1}.$$

Combining these estimates, we get

$$\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma, \gamma \text{ is elliptic}} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) h_k(\gamma, z) d\mu \ll (k^{-1+\epsilon})^n.$$

Note that here the implicit constant only depends on ϵ .

Case 3. Let $\Gamma' = \Gamma \setminus (\{\pm 1\} \cup \{\gamma \in \Gamma: \gamma \text{ is elliptic}\})$.

Since $\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma'} |h_3(\gamma, z)|$ converges uniformly on A (by Lemma 3) and $|h_3(\gamma, z)| < 1$ for all $z \in A$, $\gamma \in \Gamma'$ (by Lemma 2), there exists a constant $0 < \lambda < 1$ (dependent on A) such that $|h_3(\gamma, z)| < \lambda$ for all $z \in A$, $\gamma \in \Gamma'$. Hence

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\Gamma \backslash \mathbb{H}^n} \chi_A(z) \left(\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma'} h_k(\gamma, z) \right) d\mu &\leq \int_A \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma'} |h_3(\gamma, z)| |h_3(\gamma, z)|^{\frac{k-3}{3}} d\mu \\ &\leq \int_A \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma'} |h_3(\gamma, z)| \lambda^{\frac{k-3}{3}} d\mu \ll (\lambda_1)^k \end{aligned}$$

where $\lambda_1 = (\lambda)^3 < 1$.

From Cases 1–3 and using Shimizu's asymptotic formula (1.1) for J_k , Theorem 1 follows directly. \square

4. Some remarks

Let Γ be a discrete subgroup of $SL(2, \mathbb{R})^n$ with finite co-volume which satisfies the irreducibility condition below and Assumption (F) on its fundamental domain.

Irreducibility condition: The restriction of each of the n projections

$$p_j: SL(2, \mathbb{R})^n \rightarrow SL(2, \mathbb{R}) \quad (1 \leq j \leq n)$$

to Γ is injective.

Assumption (F): Let κ_v ($1 \leq v \leq t$) be a set of complete representatives of Γ -inequivalent cusp of Γ . For each v , take a $g_v \in SL(2, \mathbb{R})^n$ such that $g_v \kappa_v = \infty$ and put

$$U_v = \left\{ g_v^{-1} z : \prod_{i=1}^n \operatorname{Im}(z_i) > d_v, z = (z_1, \dots, z_n) \right\}$$

where d_v is a suitably chosen positive number. Let $\Gamma_{\kappa_v} = \{\gamma \in \Gamma : \gamma \kappa_v = \kappa_v\}$ and let V_v be a fundamental domain of Γ_{κ_v} in U_v . Then Γ has a fundamental domain F of the form

$$F = F_0 \cup V_1 \cup \dots \cup V_t$$

where F_0 is relatively compact in \mathbb{H}^n .

In this case, Shimizu's dimension formula (1.1) also holds for Γ [Sh]. Moreover, our propositions, lemmas and theorem in previous sections all remain true for Γ . In particular, for a non-zero ideal \mathfrak{n} of \mathcal{O} , let

$$\Gamma_0(\mathfrak{n}) = \left\{ \gamma = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in SL(2, \mathcal{O}) : c \equiv 0 \text{ modulo } \mathfrak{n} \right\}.$$

Then $\Gamma = \Gamma_0(\mathfrak{n})$ satisfies the irreducible condition and Assumption (F). Hence we have the following corollary:

Corollary 2. *For any compact subset $A \subset \Gamma_0(\mathfrak{n}) \backslash \mathbb{H}^n$ and any $0 < \epsilon < 1$, we have*

$$\int_A d\mu_k = \int_A d\mu + O_{\epsilon, A}((k^{-1+\epsilon})^n)$$

as $k \rightarrow \infty$.

Remark. Again the decay rate here is sharper than in [La], but the implicit constant depends on the compact subset A . In [La], the result is uniform.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Professors Wenzhi Luo and James Cogdell for their valuable comments.

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