

Zeros of Primitive Characters

Wenyang Wang¹ and Ni Du^{2,*}

¹ Center for General Education, Xiamen Huaxia University, Xiamen 361024, China.

² School of Mathematical Sciences, Xiamen University, Xiamen 361005, China.

Received September 28, 2020; Accepted December 29, 2020;

Published online January 21, 2022.

Abstract. Let G be a finite group. An irreducible character χ of G is said to be primitive if $\chi \neq \vartheta^G$ for any character ϑ of a proper subgroup of G . In this paper, we consider about the zeros of primitive characters. Denote by $\text{Irr}_{\text{pri}}(G)$ the set of all irreducible primitive characters of G . We proved that if $g \in G$ and the order of gG' in the factor group G/G' does not divide $|\text{Irr}_{\text{pri}}(G)|$, then there exists $\varphi \in \text{Irr}_{\text{pri}}(G)$ such that $\varphi(g) = 0$.

AMS subject classifications: 20C15

Key words: Finite group, primitive character, vanishing element.

1 Introduction

Let G be a finite group and $\text{Irr}(G)$ be the set of all irreducible characters of G . For an element g of G , g is called a vanishing element if there exists $\chi \in \text{Irr}(G)$ such that $\chi(g) = 0$. In [3], W. Burnside proved that for any nonlinear irreducible character χ , there always exists $g \in G$ such that $\chi(g) = 0$, which means that there exists at least a vanishing element for any nonlinear irreducible character χ . It is interesting to investigate when an element of a finite group can be a vanishing element. In [1], G. Chen obtained a sufficient condition to determine when an element is a vanishing element. More precisely, suppose that $g \in G - G'$ and the order of gG' in the factor group G/G' is coprime to $|\text{Irr}(G)|$, then there exists $\chi \in \text{Irr}(G)$ such that $\chi(g) = 0$. In [4], H. Wang, X. Chen and J. Zeng showed a similar sufficient condition about the Brauer characters. In [2], X. Chen and G. Chen investigated the monomial Brauer characters. An irreducible character χ of G is said to be primitive if $\chi \neq \vartheta^G$ for any character ϑ of a proper subgroup of G . In this paper, we consider about the zeros of primitive characters.

*Corresponding author. Email addresses: wangwy@hxxy.edu.cn (Wang W), duni@xmu.edu.cn (Du N)

2 Main results and proofs

First of all, we give the proof of the following formula about induced characters for the readers' convenience.

Lemma 2.1. [3, Problem 5.3] Let $H \subseteq G$ and suppose φ is a class function of H and ψ is a class function of G . Then $(\varphi\psi_H)^G = \varphi^G\psi$.

Proof. For any $g \in G$, we have $(\varphi\psi_H)^G(g) = \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{x \in G} (\varphi\psi_H)^o(xgx^{-1})$.

If $xgx^{-1} \in H$, then

$$(\varphi\psi_H)^o(xgx^{-1}) = (\varphi\psi_H)(xgx^{-1}) = \varphi(xgx^{-1})\psi_H(xgx^{-1}) = \varphi^o(xgx^{-1})\psi(g).$$

If $xgx^{-1} \notin H$, then

$$(\varphi\psi_H)^o(xgx^{-1}) = 0 = \varphi^o(xgx^{-1})\psi(g).$$

It follows that

$$(\varphi\psi_H)^G(g) = \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{x \in G} \varphi^o(xgx^{-1})\psi(g) = \left[\frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{x \in G} \varphi^o(xgx^{-1}) \right] \psi(g) = (\varphi^G\psi)(g)$$

and we are done. \square

Denote by $\text{Lin}(G)$ the set of all linear irreducible characters of G . Now we consider the product of an irreducible primitive character and a linear irreducible character.

Lemma 2.2. Let $\chi \in \text{Irr}(G)$ be a primitive character of G and λ be a linear irreducible character of G . Then $\lambda\chi$ is an irreducible primitive character.

Proof. Since $\chi \in \text{Irr}(G)$ and $\lambda(1) = 1$, it follows that $\lambda\chi$ is an irreducible character. By way of contradiction, suppose that $\lambda\chi$ is not a primitive character, then there exists a character φ of a proper subgroup H of G such that $\lambda\chi = \varphi^G$. It follows that $\chi = \overline{\lambda}\varphi^G$. Then we have

$$\chi = \overline{\lambda}\varphi^G = (\overline{\lambda}_H\varphi)^G$$

by Lemma 2.1. Since φ is a character of H , we may assume that $\varphi = a_1\psi_1 + a_2\psi_2 + \cdots + a_t\psi_t$, where $a_i \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ and $\psi_i \in \text{Irr}(H)$. Since $\overline{\lambda}_H(1) = 1$ and $\psi_i \in \text{Irr}(H)$, we have $\overline{\lambda}_H\psi_i \in \text{Irr}(H)$ and

$$\overline{\lambda}_H\varphi = \overline{\lambda}_H \left(\sum_{i=1}^t a_i\psi_i \right) = \sum_{i=1}^t a_i(\overline{\lambda}_H\psi_i)$$

with $a_i \in \mathbb{Z}^+$, which implies that $\overline{\lambda}_H\varphi$ is a character of H . It follows that $\chi = \overline{\lambda}\varphi^G = (\overline{\lambda}_H\varphi)^G$ is induced by a character $\overline{\lambda}_H\varphi$ of a proper subgroup H of G , a contradiction. \square

Denote the set of all irreducible primitive characters of G by $\text{Irr}_{\text{pri}}(G)$. We shall use the action of linear irreducible characters on the set of irreducible primitive characters to get some interesting results. The proof of the following Theorem 2.1 is an adaptation of the proof of Theorem 2.1 in [1].