

## On $d$ -complete sequences modulo $l$

by

XING-WANG JIANG (Luoyang) and BING-LING WU (Nanjing)

**Abstract.** A sequence  $\mathcal{T}$  of positive integers is called  *$d$ -complete modulo  $l$*  if for every integer  $0 \leq u \leq l - 1$ , there exists an integer  $v$  with  $vl + u > 0$  such that  $vl + u$  can be represented as the sum of distinct terms from  $\mathcal{T}$ , where no one divides any other. Recently, Chen and Yu (2023) proved that  $\{m^a n^b : a, b = 0, 1, 2, \dots\}$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$  if  $l, m, n$  are pairwise coprime with  $l, m, n \geq 2$ , and posed the following problem: characterize all positive integers  $l, m, n$  such that  $\{m^a n^b : a, b = 0, 1, 2, \dots\}$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ . We give an answer to this problem.

**1. Introduction.** Let  $\mathbb{N}_0$  be the set of all non-negative integers. A sequence  $\mathcal{T}$  of positive integers is called *complete* if every sufficiently large integer can be represented as the sum of distinct terms from  $\mathcal{T}$ . It is easy to see that the sequence  $\{2^a : a \in \mathbb{N}_0\}$  is complete and for any integer  $m > 2$ , the sequence  $\{m^a : a \in \mathbb{N}_0\}$  is not complete. In 1959, Birch [1] proved that for two coprime integers  $m > n > 1$ , the sequence  $\{m^a n^b : a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0\}$  is complete, which confirmed a conjecture of Erdős. It is interesting to study whether  $\{m^a n^b : a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0\}$  is still complete or not with the additional restriction that no summand divides any other. Erdős asked the following question: “Is it true that every integer  $> 1$  is the sum of distinct integers of the form  $2^a 3^b$  (for  $a$  and  $b$  non-negative integers), where no summand divides any other?” He overestimated the difficulty of the problem and communicated it to Jansen, who almost immediately gave a simple proof by induction. This motivated the research on  *$d$ -complete* sequences, introduced by Erdős and Lewin [6].

A positive integer  $n$  is called  *$d$ -representable* for  $\mathcal{T}$  if it can be represented as the sum of distinct terms from  $\mathcal{T}$  such that no one divides any other. A sequence  $\mathcal{T}$  of positive integers is called  *$d$ -complete* if every sufficiently large integer is  $d$ -representable for  $\mathcal{T}$ . For convenience, we use the following

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notation introduced by Chen and Yu [5]. For positive integers  $n_1, \dots, n_k$ , let

$$A(n_1, \dots, n_k) = \{n_1^{c_1} \cdots n_k^{c_k} : c_1, \dots, c_k \in \mathbb{N}_0\}.$$

In 1996, Erdős and Lewin [6] reproduced the proof of the  $d$ -completeness of  $A(2, 3)$  and proved that the sequence  $A(m, n)$  is not  $d$ -complete if  $m > n > 1$  and  $\{m, n\} \neq \{2, 3\}$ . It is natural to consider the  $d$ -completeness of the sequence  $A(l, m, n)$ . Erdős and Lewin [6] showed that  $A(2, 5, n)$  is  $d$ -complete for  $n \in \{7, 11, 13, 17, 19\}$  and  $A(3, 5, 7)$  is  $d$ -complete. In 2016, Ma and Chen [11] established a criterion for the  $d$ -completeness of  $A(2, 5, n)$  and proved that it is  $d$ -complete for  $n \in \{9, 21, 23, 27, 29, 31\}$ .

Erdős and Lewin [6] conjectured that  $A(l, m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete if  $l, m, n$  are pairwise coprime integers not less than 2. Recently, Chen and Yu [5] considered this conjecture. Let  $r_h$  be the least positive integer that is  $d$ -representable for  $A(m, n)$  and congruent to  $h$  modulo  $l$ , and let  $s_h$  be the least positive integer that can be a term in a  $d$ -representation for  $A(m, n)$  of  $r_h$ . Chen and Yu [5] gave the following criterion for the  $d$ -completeness of  $A(l, m, n)$ .

**THEOREM A** ([5, Theorem 1.1]). *Let  $l, m, n$  be pairwise coprime integers not less than 2, let  $t$  be a positive integer, and let*

$$\{a_1 < a_2 < \cdots\} = \{m^b n^c : b, c \in \mathbb{N}_0, m^b n^c \equiv 1 \pmod{l}\}.$$

(i) *There exists an explicit integer  $i_0 = i(l, m, n, t)$  such that*

$$r_h a_{i+1} + lt < (r_h + l s_h) a_i$$

*for all  $i \geq i_0$  and all  $1 \leq h \leq l - 1$ .*

(ii) *If every integer  $k$  with*

$$t < k \leq R a_{i_0} + lt$$

*is  $d$ -representable for  $A(l, m, n)$ , where  $R = \max\{r_h : 1 \leq h \leq l - 1\}$ , then  $A(l, m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete.*

As applications of Theorem A, Chen and Yu [5] showed that  $A(2, 5, n)$  is  $d$ -complete for  $1 \leq n \leq 87$  with  $\gcd(n, 10) = 1$ ,  $A(2, 7, n)$  is  $d$ -complete for  $1 \leq n \leq 33$  with  $\gcd(n, 14) = 1$ , and  $A(3, 5, n)$  is  $d$ -complete for  $1 \leq n \leq 14$  with  $\gcd(n, 15) = 1$ . For more related results, one may refer to [1–4, 6–10, 12, 13].

Chen and Yu [5] also considered  $d$ -complete sequences modulo  $l$ .

**DEFINITION 1.1.** A sequence  $\mathcal{T}$  of positive integers is called  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$  if for every integer  $0 \leq u \leq l - 1$ , there exists an integer  $v$  with  $vl + u > 0$  such that  $vl + u$  is  $d$ -representable for  $\mathcal{T}$ .

It is easy to see that a sequence  $\mathcal{T}$  of positive integers is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$  if and only if for every integer  $0 \leq u \leq l - 1$ ,  $u$  is congruent

modulo  $l$  to a sum of distinct terms from  $\mathcal{T}$  such that no one divides any other. Chen and Yu [5] proved the following results.

**THEOREM B** ([5, Theorem 5.2]). *Suppose that  $\{2, 3\} \not\subseteq \{l, m, n\}$ . If  $A(l, m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete, then  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ .*

**THEOREM C** ([5, Theorem 5.3]). *If  $l, m, n$  are pairwise coprime with  $l, m, n \geq 2$ , then  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ .*

Chen and Yu [5] posed the following problem:

**PROBLEM** ([5, Problem 5.4]). *Characterize all positive integers  $l, m, n$  such that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ .*

In this paper, we solve this problem and prove the following result.

**THEOREM 1.2.** *Let  $l, m, n$  be three integers with  $l, m, n \geq 2$ . Then  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$  if and only if at least one of the following conditions holds:*

- (1)  $\gcd(l, mn) = 1$ ,  $m \neq n^\alpha$  for any rational number  $\alpha$ ;
- (2)  $\gcd(l, m) = 1$ ,  $\gcd(l, n)$  is a prime and  $m$  is a primitive root of  $\gcd(l, n)$ ;
- (3)  $\gcd(l, n) = 1$ ,  $\gcd(l, m)$  is a prime and  $n$  is a primitive root of  $\gcd(l, m)$ ;
- (4)  $\gcd(l, m)$  and  $\gcd(l, n)$  are distinct primes, and  $m, n$  are primitive roots of  $\gcd(l, n)$  and  $\gcd(l, m)$ , respectively.

**REMARK 1.3.** It is easy to see that

- (1) for any positive integers  $m, n$ ,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo 1;
- (2) for  $l \geq 2$ , neither  $A(m, 1)$  nor  $A(1, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ .

The proof of Theorem 1.2 proceeds by applying the three lemmas proved in Section 2. Condition (1) of Theorem 1.2 follows from Lemma 2.1. If  $\gcd(l, m) = 1$  and  $\gcd(l, n) > 1$ , we point out that  $\gcd(l, n) = p$  is prime when  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ . Let  $l = l_1 p^r$  with  $\gcd(l_1, p) = 1$ . Then  $\gcd(l_1, mn) = 1$ . The arguments for the  $d$ -completeness modulo  $l_1$  and modulo  $p^r$  of  $A(m, n)$  are given in Lemmas 2.1 and 2.2, respectively. Combining this with Lemma 2.3, we obtain condition (2). Conditions (3) and (4) can be obtained by a similar discussion.

**2. Proof of Theorem 1.2.** First, we prove some lemmas which will be used to prove Theorem 1.2.

**LEMMA 2.1.** *Let  $l, m, n \geq 2$  be integers with  $\gcd(mn, l) = 1$ . Then  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$  if and only if  $m \neq n^\alpha$  for any rational number  $\alpha$ .*

*Proof.* Firstly, we prove the necessity. Since  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ , there exist non-negative integers  $a_i$  and  $b_i$  such that

$$\sum_{i=1}^r m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \equiv 0 \pmod{l}$$

with

$$(2.1) \quad m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j}, \quad i \neq j.$$

By  $\gcd(mn, l) = 1$ , we have  $r \geq 2$ . Let

$$m = p_1^{\alpha_1} \cdots p_s^{\alpha_s}, \quad n = p_1^{\beta_1} \cdots p_s^{\beta_s},$$

where  $\alpha_i, \beta_i \geq 0$  ( $1 \leq i \leq s$ ). If  $m = n^{b/a}$  for some positive integers  $a, b$  with  $\gcd(a, b) = 1$ , then  $\alpha_i = \beta_i \cdot \frac{b}{a}$  which implies that  $a \mid \beta_i$ . Since  $\alpha_i a_1 + \beta_i b_1 = \frac{\beta_i}{a}(ba_1 + ab_1)$  and  $\alpha_i a_2 + \beta_i b_2 = \frac{\beta_i}{a}(ba_2 + ab_2)$ , we have

$$p_i^{\alpha_i a_1 + \beta_i b_1} \mid p_i^{\alpha_i a_2 + \beta_i b_2} \quad (1 \leq i \leq s) \quad \text{or} \quad p_i^{\alpha_i a_2 + \beta_i b_2} \mid p_i^{\alpha_i a_1 + \beta_i b_1} \quad (1 \leq i \leq s).$$

It follows that

$$m^{a_1} n^{b_1} \mid m^{a_2} n^{b_2} \quad \text{or} \quad m^{a_2} n^{b_2} \mid m^{a_1} n^{b_1},$$

a contradiction with (2.1). Therefore,  $m \neq n^\alpha$  for any rational number  $\alpha$ .

Now, we prove the sufficiency. By Theorem C, it suffices to deal with the case  $\gcd(m, n) > 1$ . Let

$$m = p_1^{\alpha_1} \cdots p_s^{\alpha_s}, \quad n = p_1^{\beta_1} \cdots p_s^{\beta_s},$$

where  $\alpha_i, \beta_i \geq 0$  ( $1 \leq i \leq s$ ). Since  $m \neq n^\alpha$  for any rational number  $\alpha$ , it follows from  $\gcd(m, n) > 1$  that either  $m$  or  $n$  has at least two prime divisors and there are two integers  $1 \leq i_1, i_2 \leq s$  with  $\alpha_{i_1}/\beta_{i_1} \neq \alpha_{i_2}/\beta_{i_2}$ . Without loss of generality, we may assume that  $\alpha_1/\beta_1 > \alpha_2/\beta_2$ , where  $\beta_1, \beta_2 \geq 1$ . Then there exists an irreducible fraction  $d/c$  such that

$$(2.2) \quad \frac{\alpha_1}{\beta_1} > \frac{d}{c} > \frac{\alpha_2}{\beta_2}.$$

By Euler's theorem, for any integer  $1 \leq u \leq l$ ,

$$\sum_{i=1}^u m^{(u-i)c\varphi(l)} n^{id\varphi(l)} \equiv u \pmod{l}.$$

Now, we shall show that

$$(2.3) \quad m^{(u-i)c\varphi(l)} n^{id\varphi(l)} \nmid m^{(u-j)c\varphi(l)} n^{jd\varphi(l)}, \quad i \neq j.$$

Express  $m, n$  as  $m = p_1^{\alpha_1} p_2^{\alpha_2} m_1, n = p_1^{\beta_1} p_2^{\beta_2} n_1$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} m^{(u-i)c\varphi(l)} n^{id\varphi(l)} &= p_1^{\varphi(l)(\alpha_1(u-i)c + \beta_1 id)} p_2^{\varphi(l)(\alpha_2(u-i)c + \beta_2 id)} m_1^{(u-i)c\varphi(l)} n_1^{id\varphi(l)}, \\ m^{(u-j)c\varphi(l)} n^{jd\varphi(l)} &= p_1^{\varphi(l)(\alpha_1(u-j)c + \beta_1 jd)} p_2^{\varphi(l)(\alpha_2(u-j)c + \beta_2 jd)} m_1^{(u-j)c\varphi(l)} n_1^{jd\varphi(l)}. \end{aligned}$$

By (2.2), when  $i < j$ ,

$$\alpha_1(u-i)c + \beta_1id > \alpha_1(u-j)c + \beta_1jd, \quad \alpha_2(u-i)c + \beta_2id < \alpha_2(u-j)c + \beta_2jd,$$

from which one can immediately get (2.3). Therefore,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ . ■

LEMMA 2.2. *Let  $m, n$  be integers with  $m, n \geq 2$  and  $p$  be a prime with  $p | n$ . Then*

- (i)  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p$  if and only if  $m$  is a primitive root of  $p$ ;
- (ii) when  $r \geq 2$ ,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^r$  if and only if  $m$  is a primitive root of  $p$  and  $p^2 \nmid n$ .

*Proof.* First, we prove the necessity of (i) and (ii). Obviously, if  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^r$ , then it is also  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^i$  ( $1 \leq i \leq r$ ). It follows from  $p | n$  that for any integer  $1 \leq u \leq p - 1$ , there exists a non-negative integer  $a_u$  with

$$m^{a_u} \equiv u \pmod{p},$$

which shows that  $m$  is a primitive root of  $p$ .

Suppose that  $p^2 | n$  when  $r \geq 2$ . Then since  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^2$ ,

$$m^{a_p} \equiv p \pmod{p^2}$$

for some positive integer  $a_p$ , and so  $p | m$ , which is impossible since  $m$  is a primitive root of  $p$ . Thus,  $p^2 \nmid n$  when  $r \geq 2$ .

Now, we prove the sufficiency of (i) and (ii). Since  $m$  is a primitive root of  $p$ , for every integer  $1 \leq u \leq p - 1$  there is a non-negative integer  $a_u$  with

$$m^{a_u} \equiv u \pmod{p}.$$

It follows from  $n \equiv 0 \pmod{p}$  that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p$ . Hence, Lemma 2.2(i) holds.

Next, we assume that  $r \geq 2$ , and so  $p^2 \nmid n$ . Let  $n = pn_1$  with  $\gcd(p, n_1) = 1$ . We shall use induction to prove that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^r$ .

By the above argument,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p$ . Suppose that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^s$ ; we will prove that it is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^{s+1}$ .

For an integer  $0 \leq u \leq p^{s+1} - 1$ ,  $u$  can be written as

$$u = vp^s + w$$

with  $0 \leq v \leq p - 1$  and  $0 \leq w \leq p^s - 1$ . Clearly,  $n^{s+1} \equiv 0 \pmod{p^{s+1}}$ . Now, we deal with the case  $u \geq 1$ , that is, either  $v > 0$  or  $w > 0$ . Since  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^s$ , there exist non-negative integers  $a_i$  and  $b_i$  such that

$$\sum_{i=1}^{t_w} m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \equiv w \pmod{p^s}$$

with

$$(2.4) \quad m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j}, \quad 1 \leq i \neq j \leq t_w.$$

Here, we define  $t_0 = 0$  and  $\sum_{i=1}^0 m^{a_i} n^{b_i} = 0$ , and for  $w \geq 0$ , we may require that

$$(2.5) \quad a_i > p + n^s \quad \text{and} \quad 0 \leq b_i \leq s - 1$$

since  $p \mid n$  and  $m^{a_i + k\varphi(p^s)} \equiv m^{a_i} \pmod{p^s}$ . Let

$$\sum_{i=1}^{t_w} m^{a_i} n^{b_i} = v' p^s + w.$$

If  $v' \equiv v \pmod{p}$ , then

$$\sum_{i=1}^{t_w} m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \equiv v p^s + w \pmod{p^{s+1}}$$

with  $m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j}$  ( $i \neq j$ ). If  $v' \not\equiv v \pmod{p}$ , then by the  $d$ -completeness modulo  $p$  of  $A(m, n)$ , there exists an integer  $0 \leq a_{t_w+1} < p$  such that

$$m^{a_{t_w+1}} \equiv (v - v') \bar{n}_1^s \pmod{p},$$

where  $n_1 \bar{n}_1 \equiv 1 \pmod{p^{s+1}}$  (such an  $\bar{n}_1$  exists since  $\gcd(n_1, p) = 1$ ). Thus

$$\sum_{i=1}^{t_w} m^{a_i} n^{b_i} + m^{a_{t_w+1}} n^s \equiv v' p^s + w + (v - v') p^s n_1^s \bar{n}_1^s \equiv v p^s + w \pmod{p^{s+1}}.$$

By (2.5) and  $a_{t_w+1} < p$ ,

$$m^{a_{t_w+1}} n^s \nmid m^{a_i} n^{b_i}, \quad m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \nmid m^{a_{t_w+1}} n^s, \quad 1 \leq i \leq t_w.$$

It follows from (2.4) that

$$m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j}, \quad 1 \leq i \neq j \leq t_w + 1,$$

where  $b_{t_w+1} = s$ . Hence  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^{s+1}$ . Therefore, Lemma 2.2(ii) holds. ■

**LEMMA 2.3.** *Let  $r, l, m, n$  be integers with  $r \geq 1$ ,  $l, m, n \geq 2$ ,  $\gcd(l, n) = 1$  and  $p$  be a prime with  $p \mid n$ . If  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete both modulo  $l$  and modulo  $p^r$ , then  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $lp^r$ .*

*Proof.* The proof is by induction on  $r$ . First, we prove that Lemma 2.3 is true for  $r = 1$ .

For an integer  $0 \leq u \leq lp - 1$ ,  $u$  can be written as

$$u = vp + w$$

with  $0 \leq v \leq l - 1$  and  $0 \leq w \leq p - 1$ . Since  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p$ , we have  $p \nmid m$  and for  $1 \leq w \leq p - 1$ , there exists a sufficiently large integer  $a_1 = a_1(w)$  such that

$$m^{a_1} \equiv w \pmod{p}.$$

Define  $I_w = m^{a_1}$  if  $1 \leq w \leq p-1$  and  $I_w = 0$  if  $w = 0$ . Let  $I_w = v'p + w$  and  $n = n_1p$ . Noting that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$  and  $\gcd(l, n) = 1$ , there exist non-negative integers  $a_i, b_i$  ( $i \geq 2$ ) such that

$$\sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \equiv (v - v')\bar{n}_1 \pmod{l},$$

where  $\bar{n}_1 n_1 \equiv 1 \pmod{l}$  (such an  $\bar{n}_1$  exists since  $\gcd(n_1, l) = 1$ ) and

$$(2.6) \quad m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j}, \quad 2 \leq i \neq j \leq t.$$

Hence

$$\sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \equiv (v - v')\bar{n}_1 n_1 p \equiv (v - v')p \pmod{l},$$

and so

$$I_w + \sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \equiv (v - v')p + v'p + w = vp + w \pmod{l}.$$

In view of  $p \mid n$  and  $I_w \equiv w \pmod{p}$ ,

$$I_w + \sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \equiv w \equiv vp + w \pmod{p}.$$

Since  $\gcd(l, p) = 1$ , it follows that

$$I_w + \sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \equiv vp + w \pmod{lp}.$$

By (2.6),

$$m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j+1}, \quad 2 \leq i \neq j \leq t.$$

In addition, for  $1 \leq w \leq p-1$ , we have both  $m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \nmid m^{a_1}$  and  $m^{a_1} \nmid m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1}$  ( $2 \leq i \leq t$ ) since  $p \mid n$ ,  $p \nmid m$  and  $a_1$  is sufficiently large. Hence,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $lp$ . Thus, the conclusion of Lemma 2.3 is true for  $r = 1$ .

Now, we assume that  $r \geq 2$  and Lemma 2.3 holds for  $r-1$ . We shall prove that Lemma 2.3 holds for  $r$ . The proof is similar to that for  $r = 1$ .

For an integer  $0 \leq u \leq lp^r - 1$ ,  $u$  can be written as

$$u = vp + w,$$

with  $0 \leq v \leq lp^{r-1} - 1$  and  $0 \leq w \leq p-1$ . Note that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^r$ , so it is  $d$ -complete modulo  $p^s$  ( $1 \leq s \leq r$ ). Thus, for  $1 \leq w \leq p-1$ , there exists a sufficiently large integer  $a_1$  such that

$$m^{a_1} \equiv w \pmod{p}.$$

Define  $I_w = m^{a_1}$  if  $1 \leq w \leq p-1$  and  $I_w = 0$  if  $w = 0$ . Let  $I_w = v'p + w$ . By Lemma 2.2,  $p^2 \nmid n$ . We can express  $n$  as  $n = n_1p$  with  $\gcd(p, n_1) = 1$ . By inductive hypothesis,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $lp^{r-1}$ . Hence, there exist non-negative integers  $a_i, b_i$  ( $i \geq 2$ ) such that

$$\sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \equiv (v - v')\bar{n}_1 \pmod{lp^{r-1}},$$

where  $\bar{n}_1 n_1 \equiv 1 \pmod{lp^r}$  (such an  $\bar{n}_1$  exists since  $\gcd(n_1, lp^r) = 1$ ) and

$$m^{a_i} n^{b_i} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j}, \quad 2 \leq i \neq j \leq t.$$

It follows that

$$\sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \equiv (v - v')\bar{n}_1 n_1 p \equiv (v - v')p \pmod{lp^r}$$

and

$$I_w + \sum_{i=2}^t m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \equiv (v - v')p + v'p + w = vp + w \pmod{lp^r}.$$

Similar to the argument for  $r = 1$ , we have

$$m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \nmid m^{a_j} n^{b_j+1}, \quad 2 \leq i \neq j \leq t$$

and for  $1 \leq w \leq p-1$ ,

$$m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1} \nmid m^{a_1}, \quad m^{a_1} \nmid m^{a_i} n^{b_i+1}, \quad 2 \leq i \leq t.$$

Therefore,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $lp^r$ . ■

*Proof of Theorem 1.2.* Firstly, we prove the necessity. If  $\gcd(l, mn) = 1$ , then (1) is true by Lemma 2.1. If  $\gcd(l, mn) > 1$ , without loss of generality we may assume  $\gcd(l, n) = \gamma > 1$ . Since  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ , it is  $d$ -complete modulo  $\gamma$ . It follows from  $\gamma \mid n$  that for every integer  $1 \leq u \leq \gamma-1$ , there is an integer  $\alpha_u$  such that

$$m^{\alpha_u} \equiv u \pmod{\gamma}.$$

Since  $m^{\alpha_1} \equiv 1 \pmod{\gamma}$ , we see that  $\gcd(m, \gamma) = 1$ . If  $\gamma$  is composite, then there exists a prime  $p$  with  $p \mid \gamma$  and  $p < \gamma$ . However, in view of  $m^{\alpha_p} \equiv p \pmod{\gamma}$ , we have  $p \mid m$ , a contradiction to  $\gcd(m, \gamma) = 1$ . Hence, if  $\gcd(l, n) > 1$ , then  $\gcd(l, n)$  is prime and  $m$  is a primitive root of  $\gcd(l, n)$ , from which one immediately deduces (2)–(4).

Now, we prove the sufficiency. If condition (1) is true, then we infer that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$  by Lemma 2.1.

Suppose that condition (2) holds. Then  $\gcd(l, n) = p$  with  $p$  prime and  $m$  is a primitive root of  $p$ . Clearly,  $m \neq n^\alpha$  for any rational number  $\alpha$ . Let  $l = l_1 p^r$  and  $n = n_1 p^s$ , where  $\gcd(l_1, n_1) = 1$  and  $\gcd(l_1 n_1, p) = 1$ . Since  $\gcd(l, n) = p$ , we have  $r = 1$  or  $s = 1$ . By Lemma 2.2,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete

modulo  $p^r$ . Since  $\gcd(l, m) = 1$ , it follows from  $\gcd(l_1, n_1) = \gcd(l_1, p) = 1$  that  $\gcd(l_1, mn) = 1$ . By Lemma 2.1,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l_1$ . From Lemma 2.3, we see that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ . When condition (3) holds, one can prove similarly that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ .

Suppose that condition (4) holds. Let  $\gcd(l, n) = p$  and  $\gcd(l, m) = q$  be two distinct primes. Then  $l, m, n$  can be expressed as  $l = l_1 p^{r_1} q^{r_2}$ ,  $n = n_1 p^s$  and  $m = m_1 q^t$ , where  $\gcd(p, l_1 n_1) = 1$ ,  $\gcd(q, l_1 m_1) = 1$  and  $\gcd(l_1, mn) = 1$ . We have  $r_1 = 1$  or  $s = 1$  by  $\gcd(l, n) = p$ , and  $r_2 = 1$  or  $t = 1$  by  $\gcd(l, m) = q$ . By an argument similar to that when (2) holds, we deduce that  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo all of  $p^{r_1}$ ,  $q^{r_2}$  and  $l_1$ . By Lemma 2.3,  $A(m, n)$  is  $d$ -complete modulo  $l$ . ■

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Xing-Wang Jiang  
Department of Mathematics  
Luoyang Normal University  
Luoyang 471934, P.R. China  
E-mail: xwjiangnj@sina.com

Bing-Ling Wu  
School of Science  
Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications  
Nanjing 210023, P.R. China  
E-mail: wbl.math@njupt.edu.cn