

A q -analog of the Lagrange expansion

By

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1. The classical Lagrange inversion theorem gives an explicit formula for the coefficients in the expansion

$$(1.1) \quad f(z) = f(0) + \sum_{n \geq 1} \frac{c_n}{n!} \frac{z^n}{\varphi(z)^n}$$

where $f(z)$ and $\varphi(z)$ are (formal) power series with $\varphi(0) \neq 0$:

$$(1.2) \quad c_n = \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial z} \right)^{n-1} \left(f'(z) \varphi^n(z) \right) \Big|_{z=0}$$

A second less often used formula is

$$(1.3) \quad c_n = \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial z} \right)^n \left(f(z) \varphi^n(z) \left(1 - z \frac{\varphi'(z)}{\varphi(z)} \right) \right) \Big|_{z=0}.$$

Simple proofs of this formula have been given based on Rota's umbral calculus [17, 18], see e.g. [8, 17] or [12, 15] for the higher dimensional generalization of Good.

To obtain a q -analog of (1.1) one has to replace $\varphi(z)^n$ by any q -analog $\varphi_n(z)$ of the n -th power of $\varphi(z)$. After Carlitz's striking example [2] $\varphi_n(z) = (1-z)(1-qz) \dots (1-q^{n-1}z)$ it seemed natural to consider $\varphi_n(z) = \varphi(z)\varphi(qz) \dots \varphi(q^{n-1}z)$. Andrews [1] gave an analog of (1.2) in this case: he represented c_n by an $(n+1) \times (n+1)$ determinant. Garsia and Joni [7, 9] found the analog of the second version (1.3) and have developed a far reaching theory including a nice q -analog of the umbral calculus. They have also yielded the connection to Gessels paper [10], who had found a q -analog of Lagrange inversion from a different point of view. Garsia [7] has also given interesting applications to partition identities. But for the original purpose – to give such explicit and calculable formulas for the coefficients c_n as in the classical case – only Carlitz's special case seems to be practicable.

Reformulating some q -Abel identities of Jackson [14], Cigler [4] found an equally simple formula as (1.2) for $\varphi_n(z) = e(a[n]z)$. He gave a unified approach to this and Carlitz's special case and proposed how the general q -analog of (1.2) should look like. Based on his ideas we will state this formula, giving the appropriate concept of n -th power. As an application we obtain some q -analogs of Abel's identity. Finally, recent generalizations due to Krattenthaler [16] are mentioned.

A fairly good example for comparing the different nature of Garsia's q -analog to that proposed in this paper may be found in [6], where two versions of q -Catalan numbers are studied.

2. The main idea is to interpret a formal power series $f(z) = \sum a_k z^k$ as a linear operator $f(D) = \sum a_k D^k$ on the space of polynomials (over some field of characteristic zero), where D is the q -differentiation operator. (We adopt the notation of [3, 4].) If L denotes the linear functional $Lp = p(0)$ then $a_k \cdot [k]! = Lf(D) x^k$.

In order to calculate the coefficients in an expansion of the form

$$(2.1) \quad f(z) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{c_n}{[n]!} \frac{z^n}{\varphi_n(z)} \quad \text{with } \varphi_n(0) \neq 0$$

we consider the polynomial sequence $(p_n)_{n \geq 0}$ with $\deg p_n = n$, whose dual functionals are given by $LD^n/\varphi_n(D)$:

$$(2.2) \quad L \frac{D^n}{\varphi_n(D)} p_m(x) = [n]! \delta_{nm}.$$

The relevance of those polynomials for (2.1) becomes clear from

$$(2.3) \quad Lf(D)p_m(x) = \sum \frac{c_n}{[n]!} L \frac{D^n}{\varphi_n(D)} p_m(x) = c_m.$$

Now if $\varphi_n(D) = \varphi(D)^n$ (and $q = 1$) then (p_n) is the unique sequence of binomial type with deltaoperator $\frac{D}{\varphi(D)} p_n = n p_{n-1}$ (see [4, 17]). Steffensens formula $p_n = x \varphi(D)^n x^{n-1}$ together with (2.3) gives

$$c_n = Lf(D) x \varphi(D)^n x^{n-1} = Lf'(D) \varphi(D)^n x^{n-1} = LD^{n-1} f'(x) \varphi(x)^n$$

since $f(D)x - x f(D) = f'(D)$ implies $Lf(D)x = Lf'(D)$ and $Lf(D)g(x) = Lg(D)f(x)$ holds. But this is just Lagrange's formula (1.2).

Cigler [4] now suggested to determine for $q \neq 1$ those sequences (φ_n) for which the p_n 's are again given by $p_n(x) = x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1}$ as he had shown for the two special cases of Carlitz and Jackson. This is done through

Lemma 1. Consider the following statements for a sequence $(\varphi_n)_{n \geq 1}$ of formal power series with $\varphi_n(0) \neq 0$. ($f'(z)$ here means the q -derivative of $f(z)$):

- (1) $\frac{\varphi'_n(z)}{[n] \varphi_n(z)}$ is a formal power series independent of n ;
- (2) $\frac{D^k}{\varphi_k(D)} x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1} = [n]_k x \frac{\varphi_n(D)}{\varphi_k(D)} x^{n-k-1}$, where $[n]_k = \frac{[n]!}{[n-k]!}$;
- (3) $L \frac{D^k}{\varphi_k(D)} x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1} = [n]! \delta_{nk}$.

Then (1) \Rightarrow (2) \Rightarrow (3).

Proof. We will use the following operator relations (see [3], eq. (5) and (6)) where $\varepsilon p(x) = p(qx)$:

$$(2.4) \quad \begin{aligned} f(D)x - xf(qD) &= f'(D) \\ f(D)x - xf(D) &= \varepsilon f'(D) \\ f(D)\varepsilon &= \varepsilon f(qD), \end{aligned}$$

to deduce an equivalent formulation of (2):

$$\begin{aligned} D^k x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1} &= [n]_k \varphi_k(D) x \frac{1}{\varphi_k(D)} \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k-1} \\ (q^k x D^k + [k] D^{k-1}) \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1} &= [n]_k \left(x + \varepsilon \frac{\varphi'_k(D)}{\varphi_k(D)} \right) \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k-1} \\ q^k [n-1]_k x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k-1} + [k] [n-1]_{k-1} \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k} &= \\ &= [n]_k x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k-1} + [n]_k \varepsilon \frac{\varphi'_k(D)}{\varphi_k(D)} \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k-1}. \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hence } [n]_k \varepsilon \frac{\varphi'_k(D)}{\varphi_k(D)} \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k-1} &= [k] [n-1]_{k-1} \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k} - \\ - [n-1]_{k-1} x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-k-1} ([n] - q^k [n-k]) &= [k] [n-1]_{k-1} \{ \varphi_n(D) x - x \varphi_n(D) \} x^{n-k-1} \\ &= [k] [n-1]_{k-1} \varepsilon \varphi'_n(D) x^{n-k-1}. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore (2) is equivalent (for $k \leq n$) to

$$(2.5) \quad \varepsilon \left\{ \frac{\varphi'_n(D)}{[n] \varphi_n(D)} - \frac{\varphi'_k(D)}{[k] \varphi_k(D)} \right\} x^{n-k-1} = 0$$

which is an obvious consequence of (1). The other implication (2) \Rightarrow (3) is clear.

Remarks. (2) is the straightforward generalization of [4], (14). It is easy to see from (2.5) that for $q \neq 0$ even (1) \Leftrightarrow (2) holds, but the converse of (1) \Rightarrow (3) is false for every q .

Of course for $q = 1$ (1) together with appropriate initial conditions, like $\varphi_n(0) = 1$, reduces to $\varphi_n(z) = \varphi_1(z)^n$.

If we recall (2.3), an immediate consequence of Lemma 1 is

Theorem 1. *If $(\varphi_n)_{n \geq 1}$ is a sequence of formal power series $\varphi_n(0) \neq 0$ and $\varphi'_n(z)/[n] \varphi_n(z)$ independent of n , then the coefficients in the expansion*

$$f(z) = f(0) + \sum_{n \geq 1} \frac{c_n}{[n]!} \frac{z^n}{\varphi_n(z)} \quad \text{are given by } c_n = LD^{n-1} f'(z) \varphi_n(z).$$

Corollary 1. *If $(\varphi_n)_{n \geq 1}$ satisfies condition (1) of Lemma 1 and $p_n(x) = x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1}$, $p_0(x) \equiv 1$ are the corresponding polynomials, then*

$$e(xz) = \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{p_n(x)}{[n]!} \frac{z^n}{\varphi_n(z)}.$$

Proof. According to Theorem 1 the coefficients in the expansion of $e(az)$ are given by

$$LD^{n-1} e(az) a \cdot \varphi_n(z) = a L e(aD) \varphi_n(D) z^{n-1} = p_n(a)$$

since $Le(aD)$ is just the evaluation functional at $x = a$.

Examples. Set $\varphi_n(z) = \frac{e(-a[n]z + bz)}{e(z)}$.

Here $e(z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} z^n/[n]!$ is the q -exponential function which satisfies $e'(z) = e(z)$ or $e(qz) = (1 + (q - 1)z)e(z)$. The quotient rule for q -differentiation then implies

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi'_n(z) &= \frac{e(-a[n]z + bz)}{e(qbz)} (-a[n] + b) - \frac{b}{e(qbz)} e(-a[n]z + bz) \\ &= -[n]\varphi_n(z) \frac{a}{1 + (q - 1)bz} \end{aligned}$$

and (1) is fulfilled. As special cases we obtain the two cases studied by Cigler:

$$\begin{aligned} b = 0 \qquad \qquad \varphi_n(z) &= e(-a[n]z) \\ b = \frac{1}{1 - q}, a = 1 \qquad \varphi_n(z) &= \frac{e\left(\frac{q^n}{1 - q}z\right)}{e\left(\frac{z}{1 - q}\right)} = (1 - z)(1 - qz) \dots (1 - q^{n-1}z). \end{aligned}$$

The latter gives exactly Carlitz's expansion, as mentioned in the introduction.

For $f(D) = \frac{e(bD)}{e(-yD)}$ Theorem 1 gives (see also [4], (17) for $b = 0$)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{e(-yD)} &= \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{(y + b)(qy - a[k] + b) \dots (q^{k-1}y - a[k] + b)}{[k]!} \\ &\cdot \frac{D^k}{e(-a[k]D + bD)}. \end{aligned}$$

Applying these operators to x^n we get a generalization of Jackson's result [14], (2):

$$\begin{aligned} (2.6) \quad &(x + y)(x + qy) \dots (x + q^{n-1}y) \\ &= \sum_{k=0}^n \begin{bmatrix} n \\ k \end{bmatrix} (y + b)(qy - a[k] + b) \dots (q^{k-1}y - a[k] + b) \\ &\cdot (x - b + a[k]) \dots (x + q^{n-k-1}(-b + a[k])). \end{aligned}$$

For $q = 1$ this reduces to Abel's famous formula

$$(2.7) \quad (x + y)^n = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} y(y - ka)^{k-1} (x + ak)^{n-k}.$$

Corollary 1 gives in this special case (for $b = 0$, see [4], (15))

$$e(yD) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{B_k^{(a)}(y)}{[k]!} \frac{D^k}{e(-a[k]D)}$$

where $B_n^{(a)}(x) = x e(-a[n]D)x^{n-1}$ is the corresponding q -analogue of the Abel polynomial $x(x - an)^{n-1}$, studied extensively by Cigler. This implies a second q -analogue of Abel's equation (2.7)

$$H_n(x, y) = \sum_{k=0}^n \begin{bmatrix} n \\ k \end{bmatrix} B_k^{(a)}(y) (x + a[k]) \dots (x + a[k]q^{n-k-1})$$

where

$$H_n(x, a) = e(aD)x^n = \sum \begin{bmatrix} n \\ k \end{bmatrix} a^{n-k} x^k = (x + a\delta)^n$$

is another q -analogue of $(x + a)^n$.

The above example includes also a q -analogue of $(1 + z)^a$. For $b = \frac{1}{q-1}$ let us define

$$(2.8) \quad s_a(z) = e\left(az + \frac{z}{q-1}\right) / e\left(\frac{z}{q-1}\right) = \sum_{k \geq 0} \frac{(a)_k}{[k]!} z^k$$

with $(a)_k = a(a - [1]) \dots (a - [n - 1])$.

Since $s'_a(z) = \frac{a}{1+z} s_a(z)$, $\varphi_n(z) = s_{a[n]}(z)$ is the n -th power of $s_a(z)$ in the sense of Lemma 1.

Obviously $s_a(z)$ is a q -analogue of $(1 + z)^a$; its properties have been studied in [5]. We mention only the useful identity

$$\frac{s_a(z)}{s_b(z)} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(a-b)(a-qb-[1]) \dots (a-q^{n-1}b-[n-1])}{[n]!} z^n$$

which follows immediately from (2.8) and the q -binomial theorem [3], (12).

As we derived q -Abel identities, one may now in a similar way obtain q -analogues of the Gould-Rothe identity

$$\binom{x+y}{n} = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{y+ka}{k} \frac{y}{y+ka} \binom{x-ak}{n-k}$$

and of the Gould polynomials $\frac{x}{x+ak} \binom{x+ak}{k}$ (see [18], ch. 12) which are the difference analogues of the Abel polynomials.

In fact the resulting q -identity can be obtained directly from (2.6) replacing x by $x + \frac{1}{q-1}$, y by $y - \frac{1}{q-1}$ and $b = \frac{1}{q-1}$.

3. In the following we derive a second q -analogue of the Lagrange expansion, which is based on

Lemma 2. Consider the following conditions for a sequence $(\psi_n)_{n \geq 1}$ of formal power series with $\psi_n(0) \neq 0$, where $q \neq 0$:

- (1) $q^n \frac{\psi'_n(z)}{[n] \psi_n(qz)}$ is independent of n ;
- (2) $\frac{D^k}{\psi_k(D)} x \psi_n(qD) x^{n-1} = [n]_k x \frac{\psi_n(qD)}{\psi_k(qD)} x^{n-k-1}$;
- (3) $L \frac{D^k}{\psi_k(D)} x \psi_n(qD) x^{n-1} = [n]! \delta_{nk}$.

Then (1) \Leftrightarrow (2) \Rightarrow (3).

Proof. Using again relations (2.4) we see that (2) is equivalent to

$$D^k x \psi_n(qD) x^{n-1} = [n]_k \psi_k(D) x \frac{1}{\psi_k(qD)} \psi_n(qD) x^{n-k-1}$$

$$(x D^k + \varepsilon [k] D^{k-1}) \psi_n(qD) x^{n-1} = [n]_k \left(x + \frac{\psi'_k(D)}{\psi_k(qD)} \right) \psi_n(qD) x^{n-k-1}.$$

Hence

$$[n]_k \psi'_k(D) \frac{\psi_n(qD)}{\psi_k(qD)} x^{n-k-1} = \varepsilon [k] [n-1]_{k-1} \psi_n(qD) x^{n-k}$$

$$- ([n]_k - [n-1]_k) x \psi_n(qD) x^{n-k-1}$$

$$= [n-1]_{k-1} [k] q^{n-k} (\psi_n(D) x - x \psi_n(qD)) x^{n-k-1}$$

$$= [n-1]_{k-1} [k] q^{n-k} \psi'_n(D) x^{n-k-1}.$$

So (2) can be written as

$$\left\{ \frac{q^k \psi'_k(D)}{[k] \psi_k(qD)} - \frac{q^n \psi'_n(D)}{[n] \psi_n(qD)} \right\} x^{n-k-1} = 0.$$

But this is obviously equivalent to (1).

Theorem 2. If $(\psi_n)_{n \geq 1}$ is a sequence of f.p.s. with $\psi_n(0) \neq 0$ and $q^n \psi'_n(z)/[n] \psi_n(qz)$ independent of n and $q \neq 0$, then the coefficients in the expansion

$$f(z) = f(0) + \sum_{n \geq 1} \frac{d_n}{[n]!} \frac{z^n}{\psi_n(z)}$$

are given by

$$d_n = L D^{n-1} f'(z) \psi_n(qz).$$

Corollary 2. Under the same assumptions

$$e(xz) = \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{q_n(x)}{[n]!} \frac{z^n}{\psi_n(z)} \quad \text{holds with} \quad q_n(x) = x \psi_n(qD) x^{n-1}.$$

Remark. Conditions (1) and (1)' are closely related: Substituting q by q^{-1} in a sequence (φ_n) which satisfies (1), one obtains a sequence satisfying (1)'. Hence the two Theorems are trivially equivalent. But there does not seem to be an easy relation between the corresponding polynomials p_n and q_n (if $q \neq 1$).

Examples.
$$\psi_n(z) = \frac{e(bz)}{e\left(a\frac{[n]}{q^n}z + bz\right)} \text{ satisfy (1)'}$$

Setting $b = \frac{1}{1-q}$, $a = 1$ we get $\psi_n(z) = \left(1 - \frac{z}{q}\right) \dots \left(1 - \frac{z}{q^n}\right)$. The resulting expansion theorem was obtained in [4], (9). For $b = 0$ the corresponding polynomials $q_n(x) = x\psi_n(qD)x^{n-1}$ have the form

$$\begin{aligned} q_n(x) &= x e\left(a\frac{[n]}{q^{n-1}}D\right)^{-1} x^{n-1} = x\left(x - a\frac{[n]}{q}\right)\left(x - a\frac{[n]}{q^2}\right) \dots \left(x - a\frac{[n]}{q^{n-1}}\right) \\ &= q^{-\binom{n}{2}} b_n^{(a)}(x), \end{aligned}$$

where the $b_n^{(a)}(x)$ are another q -analog of the Abel polynomials occurring in [4], (19).

Corollary 2 gives another result of Jackson [14], (5)

$$e(yD) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{[k]!} y\left(y - a\frac{[k]}{q}\right) \dots \left(y - a\frac{[k]}{q^{k-1}}\right) D^k e\left(a\frac{[k]}{q^k}D\right).$$

These operators applied to x^n , we obtain a third q -analog of (2.7):

$$H_n(x, y) = \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{[n]}{[k]} y\left(y - a\frac{[k]}{q}\right) \dots \left(y - a\frac{[k]}{q^{k-1}}\right) H_{n-k}\left(x, a\frac{[k]}{q^k}\right).$$

4. The polynomials $p_n(x) = x\varphi_n(D)x^{n-1}$ and $q_n(x) = x\psi_n(qD)x^{n-1}$ may be considered as q -analogs of the celebrated polynomials of binomial type which enjoy a great number of beautiful properties and satisfy nice identities. The question arises which of them may be extended to our q -analogs in a simple way. It seems that those are rather few. Among them are what Rota [18] called the "closed forms":

Proposition. Suppose (φ_n) and (ψ_n) satisfy condition (1) resp. (1)' and let

$$(4.1) \quad \tilde{\varphi}(D) = -D \frac{\varphi'_n(D)}{[n]\varphi_n(D)} \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{\psi}(D) = -D \frac{q^n \psi'_n(D)}{[n]\psi_n(qD)}.$$

Then the following formulas hold:

(i) $p_n(x) = x\varphi_n(D)x^{n-1} = (1 + \varepsilon\tilde{\varphi}(D))\varphi_n(D)x^n = q^{-n}\varepsilon(1 + \tilde{\varphi}(D))\varphi_n(D)x^n,$

$$p_n(x) = x\left(x - \varepsilon[n]\frac{\tilde{\varphi}(D)}{D}\right)^{n-1} 1 \quad (\text{if further } \varphi_n(0) = 1);$$

(i)' $q_n(x) = x\psi_n(qD)x^{n-1} = (1 + \tilde{\psi}(D))\psi_n(qD)x^n;$

- (ii) $[n] p_n(x) = x D(1 + \varepsilon \tilde{\varphi}(D))^{-1} p_n(x),$
 $[n] p_n(qx) = x D(1 + \tilde{\varphi}(D))^{-1} p_n(x);$
- (ii)' $[n] q_n(x) = x D(1 + \tilde{\psi}(D))^{-1} q_n(x).$

Proof. We again use the relations (2.4):

$$\begin{aligned}
 p_n(x) &= x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1} = \varphi_n(D) x^n - \varepsilon \varphi'_n(D) x^{n-1} = (1 + \varepsilon \tilde{\varphi}(D)) \varphi_n(D) x^n \\
 p_n(x) &= x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1} = x \left[\varphi_n(D) x \frac{1}{\varphi_n(D)} \right]^{n-1} 1 = x \left[x + \varepsilon \frac{\varphi'_n(D)}{\varphi_n(D)} \right]^{n-1} 1 \\
 &= x(x - \varepsilon [n] \tilde{\varphi}(D)/D)^{n-1} 1 \\
 [n] p_n(x) &= [n] x \varphi_n(D) x^{n-1} = x D \varphi_n(D) x^n = x D(1 + \varepsilon \tilde{\varphi}(D))^{-1} p_n(x).
 \end{aligned}$$

The other relations follow in a similar way. \square

As a consequence of (i) and (i)' we obtain a q -analog of the second form (1.3) of the Lagrange formula:

Theorem 3. *Under the assumptions of Theorem 1 and 2, and if $q \neq 0$, the following additional formulas hold for the coefficients c_n resp. d_n :*

$$\begin{aligned}
 c_n &= q^{-n} LD^n f(qx) \varphi_n(x) (1 + \tilde{\varphi}(x)), \\
 d_n &= LD^n f(x) \psi_n(qx) (1 + \tilde{\psi}(x))
 \end{aligned}$$

where $\tilde{\varphi}$ and $\tilde{\psi}$ are given by (4.1).

5. Concluding remarks. Since the first version of this paper was presented for publication a lot of new and remarkable results have been obtained: First Ch. Krattenthaler has found a very short and elegant proof of Theorems 1–3 avoiding operators and the polynomials p_n . He further combined Theorem 1 and 2 in a very surprising way to obtain the following more general q -Lagrange inversion theorem (see [16]):

Theorem 4. *Let φ_n, ψ_n be as in Theorem 1 and 2 and $\tilde{\varphi}, \tilde{\psi}$ be given by (4.1). Then the coefficients in the expansion*

$$f(z) = f(0) + \sum_{n \geq 1} \frac{a_n}{[n]!} \frac{z^n}{\varphi_n(z) \psi_n(z)}$$

are given by

$$a_n = LD^{n-1} f'(z) \varphi_n(z) \psi_n(qz) = LD^n f(z) \varphi_n\left(\frac{z}{q}\right) \psi_n(qz) \left(1 + \tilde{\varphi}\left(\frac{z}{q}\right) + \tilde{\psi}(z)\right).$$

The simplest but also most important special case of Theorem 4 is obtained from Carlitz's example

$$\begin{aligned}
 \varphi_n(z) &= (1 - az)(1 - qaz) \dots (1 - q^{n-1}az) \quad \text{and} \\
 \psi_n(z) &= \left(1 - \frac{z}{q}\right) \dots \left(1 - \frac{z}{q^n}\right), \quad \text{where } \tilde{\varphi}(z) = \frac{az}{1 - az} \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{\psi}(z) = \frac{z}{1 - z}.
 \end{aligned}$$

The resulting inversion formula is closely related to the q -analogs of the Jacobi-polynomials. It may be used to derive q -analogs of inverse relations of Legendre and Čebyshev type (see [16]) and also to study a new kind of q -Catalan numbers [6].

This important special case has been obtained independently by Gessel and Stanton [11], using basic hypergeometric series. They more generally gave q -analogs of expansions (1.1) with $\varphi(z) = (1-z)^b$ which do not seem (besides $b = 1, 2, \frac{1}{2}$) to be covered by Theorem 4. But see [13] for a unified approach to both formulas, where Lagrange inversion is treated as an eigenvalue problem.

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