RESEARCH ARTICLE

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On the divisibility $F_k | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$

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ABSTRACT: Let F_n and L_n be the *n*th Fibonacci and Lucas numbers, respectively. We show that if $F_k | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$, then $k \in \{4, 7\}$; if $L_k | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$, then $k \in \{2, 4\}$.

KEYWORDS: Fibonacci number, Lucas number, divisibility, Diophantine equation, factorization

MSC2010: 11B39 11D99

INTRODUCTION AND MAIN RESULTS

As usual, the sequence of Fibonacci numbers is defined by the recurrence $F_n = F_{n-1} + F_{n-2}$ for $n \ge 2$ with the initial values $F_0 = 0$, $F_1 = 1$. This sequence can be extended for all integers n if one applies the recursive rule backward. This approach provides $F_{-n} = (-1)^{n+1}F_n$ for all $n \ge 0$. The associated sequence of Lucas numbers is given by $L_0 = 2$, $L_1 = 1$, and $L_n = L_{n-1} + L_{n-2}$ for $n \ge 2$. Its extension to \mathbb{Z} satisfies $L_{-n} = (-1)^n L_n$ for all $n \ge 0$. From a large number of identities involving Fibonacci numbers, we first recall

$$F_{u} \neq 1 = \begin{cases} F_{\frac{u+2}{2}}L_{\frac{u+2}{2}}, & \text{if } u \equiv 0 \pmod{4}; \\ F_{\frac{u+1}{2}}L_{\frac{u+1}{2}}, & \text{if } u \equiv 1 \pmod{4}; \\ F_{\frac{u+2}{2}}L_{\frac{u+2}{2}}, & \text{if } u \equiv 2 \pmod{4}; \\ F_{\frac{u+1}{2}}L_{\frac{u+1}{2}}, & \text{if } u \equiv 3 \pmod{4}, \end{cases}$$
(1)

which provides a natural factorization of a Fibonacci number plus/minus 1. The verification of (1) can be done by using the well-known Binet formula and a straightforward calculation. Bravo, Komatsu, and Luca [1], and Luca and Szalay [3] used this formula in their calculations for the distance between the integers of the forms $F_nF_{n+1}\cdots F_{n+k}$ and F_n^m , and for the Fibonacci Diophantine tuples, respectively. Pongsriiam [7] also applied it in his solution to certain Diophantine equations, and a generalization of these equations is solved by Szalay [9]. Clearly, the equality $F_u^2 - 1 = (F_u - 1)(F_u + 1)$ gives a kind of factorization into 4 factors, but after regrouping them, we obtain

$$F_u^2 - 1 = \begin{cases} F_{u-2}F_{u+2}, & \text{if } u \equiv 0 \pmod{2}; \\ F_{u-1}F_{u+1}, & \text{if } u \equiv 1 \pmod{2}. \end{cases}$$
(2)

It is easy to see that there exists a similar formula for $F_u^2 + 1$ as follows:

$$F_u^2 + 1 = \begin{cases} F_{u-1}F_{u+1}, & \text{if } u \equiv 0 \pmod{2}; \\ F_{u-2}F_{u+2}, & \text{if } u \equiv 1 \pmod{2}. \end{cases}$$
(3)

The formulas (2) and (3), and their generalizations are a tool in solving a variation of Brocard-Ramanujan equation as shown in the work of Pink and Szikszai [5], Pongsriiam [6], Sahukar and Panda [8], and Szalay [9]. Since $F_u^4 - 1 = (F_u^2 - 1)(F_u^2 + 1)$, we obtain a factorization of $F_u^4 - 1$ from (2) and (3), but the question arises naturally: is there any Fibonacci or Lucas factorization of $F_u^3 - 1$? The identity $F_u^3 - 1 = (F_u - 1)(F_u^2 + F_u + 1)$ shows that we need only to analyze the second factor.

It turned out that the situation is completely different from the other cases. The precise result is the following.

Theorem 1 If $k \ge 3$ and $F_k | F_n^2 + F_n + 1$, then k = 4 ($F_4 = 3$) or k = 7 ($F_7 = 13$). Moreover

(i) $3 | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$ if and only if x = 8t + 1 or x = 8t + 2or x = 8t + 7 for some $t \in \mathbb{Z}$; ScienceAsia 47 (2021)

(ii) $13 | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$ if and only if x = 28t + 4 or x = 28t + 10 for some $t \in \mathbb{Z}$.

We also investigated a related problem, where the divisor F_k is replaced by the Lucas number L_k .

Theorem 2 If $k \ge 2$ and $L_k | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$, then k = 2 ($L_2 = 3$) or k = 4 ($L_4 = 7$). Moreover

- (i) $3 | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$ if and only if x = 8t+1 or x = 8t+2or x = 8t+7 for some $t \in \mathbb{Z}$;
- (ii) $7 | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$ if and only if x = 16t + 3 or x = 16t + 12 or x = 16t + 13 for some $t \in \mathbb{Z}$.

An easy consequence of the theorems above is

Corollary 1 $F_x^2 + F_x + 1$ is never divisible by two distinct Lucas numbers larger than 1. In addition, $F_x^2 + F_x + 1$ is divisible by two distinct Fibonacci numbers larger than 1 if and only if x = 56t + 10 ($t \in \mathbb{Z}$), and in this case the two Fibonacci factors are 3 and 13.

To prove the main results, we recall the following two lemmas appearing in the proof of Theorem 1 of Németh, Soydan, and Szalay [4], and in Lemma 1 of Komatsu, Luca, and Tachiya [2].

Lemma 1 (Németh, Soydan, and Szalay [4]) The sequence $(F_n)_{n \in \mathbb{Z}}$ is periodic modulo F_k with period 4k.

Lemma 2 (Komatsu, Luca, and Tachiya [2]) *Let* $X \ge 3$ *be a real number. Let* $a, b \in \mathbb{N}$ *with* $\max\{a, b\} \le X$. Then there exist integers u, v not both zero such that $\max\{|u|, |v|\} \le \sqrt{X}$ and $|au + bv| \le 3\sqrt{X}$.

PROOF OF Theorem 1

Assume that $F_k | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$. By Lemma 1, reducing x modulo 4k in the relation $F_k | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$, we may assume that $|x| \leq 2k$. Now we write $\omega = e^{2\pi i/3}$ and

$$F_x^2 + F_x + 1 = (F_x - \omega)(F_x - \overline{\omega}).$$

Writing $(\alpha, \beta) = ((1 + \sqrt{5})/2, (1 - \sqrt{5})/2)$, we have the Binet formula

$$F_n = \frac{\alpha^n - \beta^n}{\sqrt{5}}$$
 valid for all $n \in \mathbb{Z}$.

Note that $\beta = -\alpha^{-1}$. Clearly

$$F_{x} - \omega = \frac{\alpha^{x} - \beta^{x}}{\sqrt{5}} - \omega = \frac{\alpha^{x} - (-1)^{x} \alpha^{-x} - \sqrt{5}\omega}{\sqrt{5}}$$
$$= \frac{\alpha^{-x}}{\sqrt{5}} (\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\omega\alpha^{x} - (-1)^{x}),$$

and similarly

$$F_x - \overline{\omega} = \frac{\alpha^{-x}}{\sqrt{5}} (\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\overline{\omega}\alpha^x - (-1)^x).$$

Thus,

$$F_k \left| \frac{(\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\omega\alpha^x - (-1)^x)}{\sqrt{5}} \cdot \frac{(\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\overline{\omega}\alpha^x - (-1)^x)}{\sqrt{5}} \right|$$

The factors in the right–hand side are in the field $\mathbb{K} := \mathbb{Q}(\omega, \sqrt{5}) \subset \mathbb{Q}(\zeta^{2\pi i/15})$, which is a class number 1 field of degree 4. Thus, all ideals in $\mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{K}}$ are principal.

In fact, the two factors $F_x - \omega$ and $F_x - \overline{\omega}$ are almost coprime since their greatest common divisor divides $\omega - \overline{\omega} = i\sqrt{3}$ and $i\sqrt{3}$ is prime in $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{K}}$ since the prime 3 is inert in $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{5})$. Thus, these two factors are not coprime only if $F_x \equiv 1 \pmod{i\sqrt{3}}$ since otherwise $F_x^2 + F_x + 1$ is coprime to 3. Then

$$F_x - \omega \equiv 1 - \omega = \frac{3}{2} - \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}i = -i\sqrt{3}\left(\frac{1}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}i\right)$$
$$\equiv 0 \pmod{i\sqrt{3}}.$$

In this case $F_x^2 + F_x + 1 \equiv 3 \pmod{9}$, and the factor 3 gets split into two pieces associated to $i\sqrt{3}$ each, one which goes into $F_x - \omega$ and the other goes into $F_x - \overline{\omega}$, and the quotients remain coprime.

Hence, if $F_x \not\equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, or $F_x \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ but F_k is not a multiple of 3, then

$$F_{k} = \gcd\left(F_{k}, \frac{\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\omega\alpha^{x} - (-1)^{x}}{\sqrt{5}}\right) \times \gcd\left(F_{k}, \frac{\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\overline{\omega}\alpha^{x} - (-1)^{x}}{\sqrt{5}}\right).$$

Otherwise, if $F_x \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ and $3 \mid F_k$, then we divide across by 3 and get

$$\frac{F_k}{3} = \gcd\left(\frac{F_k}{3}, \frac{\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\omega\alpha^x - (-1)^x}{i\sqrt{15}}\right) \\ \times \gcd\left(\frac{F_k}{3}, \frac{\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\overline{\omega}\alpha^x - (-1)^x}{i\sqrt{15}}\right)$$

and now $(\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\omega \alpha^x - (-1)^x)/(i\sqrt{15})$ and $(\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\omega \alpha^x - (-1)^x)/(i\sqrt{15})$ are coprime.

To unify the two branches we introduce $\varepsilon = 1$ or $i\sqrt{3}$ according to the previous two cases. It follows that

$$\frac{F_k}{\varepsilon^2} \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{K}} = \mathscr{U} \cdot \mathscr{V} = (U \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{K}}) \cdot (V \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{K}}), \qquad (4)$$

where \mathscr{U} and \mathscr{V} are the greatest common divisor ideals of

$$\frac{F_k}{\varepsilon^2}$$
 and $\frac{(\alpha^{2x}-\sqrt{5}\omega\alpha^x-(-1)^x)}{\sqrt{5}\varepsilon}$,

and

$$\frac{F_k}{\varepsilon^2}$$
 and $\frac{(\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5\omega\alpha^x} - (-1)^x)}{\sqrt{5\varepsilon}}$

in $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{K}}$, respectively, and U, V are generators of \mathcal{U} and \mathcal{V} , respectively. Note that \mathcal{V} is the complex conjugate of \mathcal{U} , so we can choose $V = \overline{U}$. Thus,

$$\frac{F_k}{\varepsilon^2} = \lambda U \overline{U},$$

where λ is a unit in K. Since $U\overline{U}$ is real and it is an element of the real subfield of K, which is $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{5})$, so is λ . Conjugating the above relation by the only nontrivial automorphism σ of $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{5})$, we get that

$$F_k^2 = \varepsilon^4 |\lambda \lambda^{\sigma}| U U^{\sigma} \overline{U U}^{\sigma}, \qquad (5)$$

and $|\lambda\lambda^{\sigma}| = |N_{\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{5}):\mathbb{Q}}(\lambda)| = 1$ as being the norm of the unit λ from $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{5})$ to \mathbb{Q} . It remains to bound the absolute values of U and its three other conjugates conjugates U^{σ} , \overline{U} , and \overline{U}^{σ} . For this, we look at U and write

$$\alpha^{2x}-\sqrt{5}\omega\alpha^{x}-\mu=(\alpha^{x}-z_{1})(\alpha^{x}-z_{2}),$$

 $\mu = (-1)^x \in \{\pm 1\}$, where

$$z_{1,2} = \frac{\sqrt{5}\omega \pm \sqrt{5\omega^2 + 4\mu}}{2}.$$

We work in the quadratic extension $\mathbb{L} = \mathbb{K}(z_1)$ of \mathbb{K} and write

$$U\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{L}} \mid \mathscr{U}_{1}\mathscr{U}_{2},$$

where $\mathscr{U}_i = \gcd(\mathscr{U} \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{L}}, (\alpha^x - z_i) \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{L}})$ for i = 1, 2. Let us look at \mathscr{U}_i . This ideal fulfils the following conditions:

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha^{2k} &\equiv (-1)^k \pmod{\mathscr{U}_i}; \\ \alpha^x &\equiv z_i \pmod{\mathscr{U}_i}. \end{aligned}$$
 (6)

The first relation comes from the fact that $\mathcal{U}_i \mid \mathcal{U} \mid F_k \mid \alpha^k - \beta^k$ and

$$\alpha^{k} - \beta^{k} = \alpha^{k} - (-1)^{k} \alpha^{-k} = \alpha^{-k} (\alpha^{2k} - (-1)^{k}),$$

and α^k is a unit. Note that $\max\{2k, |x|\} \leq 2k$. By Lemma 2, there are integers *a*, *b* not both 0 with $\max\{|a|, |b|\} \leq \sqrt{2k}$ such that $|2ka + xb| \leq 3\sqrt{2k}$.

Raising the first congruence in (6) to a and the second to b and multiplying them, we get

$$\alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^{ka} z_i^b \equiv 0 \pmod{\mathscr{U}_i} \text{ for } i = 1, 2.$$

In particular,

$$U\mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{L}} \mid \mathscr{U}_1 \mathscr{U}_2 \mid (\alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^{ka} z_1^b)(\alpha^{2ka+kb} - (-1)^{ka} z_2^b).$$

The expression in the right hand side is symmetric in z_1, z_2 so it belongs to \mathbb{K} . Let us show that it is not zero. If it were, then

$$\alpha^{4ka+2xb} = z_i^{2b} \tag{7}$$

for some i = 1, 2. We checked that z_i is complex non real for both x even and odd. The same is true for ω replaced by ω^2 . If b = 0, then $\alpha^{4ka} = 1$, so a = 0, which is false since we cannot have both a and b be zero. So, $b \neq 0$. We can now complex conjugate the above relation (7) to get that

$$\alpha^{4ka+2xb} = \overline{z_i}^{2b},$$

and taking ratios we get $(z_i/\overline{z_i})^{2b} = 1$, so $z_i/\overline{z_i}$ is a root of unity, and this is also false. In fact, it turns out that in all cases $z_i/\overline{z_i}$ is of degree 4 and has two real conjugates, one of absolute value larger than 1 and one of absolute value smaller than 1 so it cannot be a root of unity. Thus, we get that

$$U = v^{-1} (\alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^k z_1^b) (\alpha^{2ka+kb} - (-1)^k z_2^b),$$

where v is some algebraic integer in \mathbb{K} . Thus,

$$|U| = |\nu|^{-1} \left| (\alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^k z_1^b) (\alpha^{2ka+kb} - (-1)^k z_2^b) \right|.$$
(8)

We computed the absolute values of z_i for i = 1, 2and also of the analogous numbers with ω replaced by ω^2 . We get that they are smaller than 2.5 < α^2 . Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^k z_i^b \right| &\leq \alpha^{3\sqrt{2k}} + \alpha^{2\sqrt{2k}} \\ &= \alpha^{3\sqrt{2k}} \left(1 + \frac{1}{\alpha^{\sqrt{2k}}} \right). \end{aligned}$$

Hence,

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^{k} z_{1}^{b} \right| \left| \alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^{k} z_{2}^{b} \right| \\ &\leqslant \alpha^{6\sqrt{2k}} \left(1 + \frac{1}{\alpha^{\sqrt{2k}}} \right)^{2}. \end{aligned}$$
(9)

Doing this for \overline{U} , U^{σ} , \overline{U}^{σ} and using (5) as well as (8) and its conjugates and (9) and its conjugates, we get that

$$F_{k}^{2} \leq 9U\overline{U}U^{\sigma}\overline{U}^{\sigma} \leq 9|N_{\mathbb{K}:\mathbb{Q}}(\nu)|^{-1} \left(\alpha^{6\sqrt{2k}} \left(1 + \frac{1}{\alpha^{\sqrt{2k}}}\right)^{2}\right)^{4}$$
$$\leq 9\alpha^{24\sqrt{2k}} \left(1 + \frac{1}{\alpha^{\sqrt{2k}}}\right)^{8}. \tag{10}$$

ScienceAsia 47 (2021)

Now

$$F_{k}^{2} = \frac{(\alpha^{k} - \beta^{k})^{2}}{5} \ge \frac{\alpha^{2k}}{5} \left(1 - \frac{1}{\alpha^{2k}}\right)^{2} \ge \alpha^{2k-4} \left(1 + \frac{2}{\alpha^{2k}}\right)^{-2}, \quad (11)$$

which together with (10), and $9 < \alpha^5$ gives

$$\alpha^{2k-4} \leq \alpha^{24\sqrt{2k}+5} \left(1 + \frac{1}{\alpha^{\sqrt{2k}}}\right)^8 \left(1 + \frac{2}{\alpha^{2k}}\right)^2$$

For $k \ge 300$, the factor

$$\left(1+\frac{1}{\alpha^{\sqrt{2k}}}\right)^8 \left(1+\frac{2}{\alpha^{2k}}\right)^2$$

is smaller than 1.00007. In particular, smaller than α . So,

$$2k < 24\sqrt{2k+10},$$

which gives $\sqrt{2k} < 25$, so $k \le 312$. For $k \in [3, 312]$ and $x \in [0, 4k - 1]$, we checked $F_k \mid F_x^2 + F_x + 1$, getting only the following values of (k, x):

$$(4, 1), (4, 2), (4, 7), (4, 9), (4, 10), (4, 15), (7, 4), (7, 10).$$

So, indeed $k \in \{4, 7\}$. The rest of the statements come from the analysis of the sequence $(F_n^2 + F_n + 1)_{n \in \mathbb{Z}}$ modulo $F_4 = 3$ and modulo $F_7 = 13$, respectively.

PROOF OF Theorem 2

This proof is very similar to the proof of Theorem 1. Thus, we emphasize only the differences.

Assume that $L_k | F_x^2 + F_x + 1$. First observe that since $F_{2k} = F_k L_k$ we get that the sequence $\{F_n\}_{n \ge 0}$ is periodic modulo L_k with period 8k. Hence we suppose that $|x| \le 4k$. Clearly,

$$L_k \left| \frac{(\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\omega\alpha^x - (-1)^x)}{\sqrt{5}} \cdot \frac{(\alpha^{2x} - \sqrt{5}\overline{\omega}\alpha^x - (-1)^x)}{\sqrt{5}} \right|,$$

and we have

$$\frac{L_k}{\varepsilon^2} \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{K}} = \mathscr{U} \cdot \mathscr{V} = (U \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{K}}) \cdot (V \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{K}}).$$
(12)

Now

$$\frac{L_k}{\varepsilon^2} = \lambda U \overline{U},$$

and later

 $U \mathscr{O}_{\mathbb{L}} \mid \mathscr{U}_1 \mathscr{U}_2,$

where again $\mathscr{U}_i = \gcd(\mathscr{U} \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{L}}, (\alpha^x - z_i) \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{L}})$. In this case, the system of congruences is

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha^{2k} &\equiv -(-1)^k = (-1)^{k+1} \pmod{\mathscr{U}_i}; \\ \alpha^x &\equiv z_i \pmod{\mathscr{U}_i}, \end{aligned} \tag{13}$$

because $\mathscr{U}_i \mid \mathscr{U} \mid L_k \mid \alpha^k + \beta^k$ and

$$\alpha^k + \beta^k = \alpha^{-k} (\alpha^{2k} + (-1)^k).$$

Knowing max{2k, |x|} $\leq 4k$, there are integers *a*, *b* with max{|a|, |b|} $\leq \sqrt{4k} = 2\sqrt{k}$ such that $|2ka + xb| \leq 6\sqrt{k}$. Subsequently,

$$\begin{aligned} |\alpha^{2ka+xb} - (-1)^{(k+1)a} z_i^b| &\leq \alpha^{6\sqrt{k}} + \alpha^{4\sqrt{k}} \\ &= \alpha^{6\sqrt{k}} \left(1 + \frac{1}{\alpha^{2\sqrt{k}}}\right) \end{aligned}$$

Since $L_k > F_k$, we get

$$\alpha^{2k-4} \leq \alpha^{48\sqrt{k}+5} \left(1 + \frac{1}{\alpha^{2\sqrt{k}}}\right)^8 \left(1 + \frac{2}{\alpha^{2k}}\right)^2$$

and then

$$2k < 48\sqrt{k} + 10.$$

Hence $k \le 585$. For $k \in [2, 585]$ and $x \in [0, 8k - 1]$, we checked $L_k \mid F_x^2 + F_x + 1$, getting only the following values of (k, x):

$$(2,1), (2,2), (2,7), (2,9), (2,10), (2,15),$$

 $(4,3), (4,12), (4,13), (4,19), (4,28), (4,29).$

The rest of the statements come from the analysis of the sequence $\{F_n^2 + F_n + 1\}_{n \in \mathbb{Z}}$ modulo $L_2 = 3$ and modulo $L_4 = 7$, respectively.

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