LUCAS-TYPE CONGRUENCES FOR CYCLOTOmic ψ-COEFFICIENTS

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Abstract. Let $p$ be any prime and $a$ be a positive integer. For $l, n \in \{0, 1, \ldots \}$ and $r \in \mathbb{Z}$, the normalized cyclotomic $\psi$-coefficient

$$\binom{n}{r}_{l,p^a} := p^{-\left\lfloor \frac{n-p^a-1-lp^a}{p^{a-1}(p-1)} \right\rfloor} \sum_{k \equiv r \pmod{p^a}} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \binom{k-r}{p^a}$$

is known to be an integer. In this paper, we show that this coefficient behaves like binomial coefficients and satisfies some Lucas-type congruences. This implies that a congruence of Wan is often optimal, and two conjectures of Sun and Davis are true.

1. Introduction

As usual, the binomial coefficient $\binom{x}{0}$ is regarded as 1. For $k \in \mathbb{Z}^+ = \{1, 2, \ldots \}$, we define

$$\binom{x}{k} = \frac{x(x-1) \cdots (x-k+1)}{k!}$$

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and adopt the convention \( \binom{x}{k} = 0 \).

The following remarkable result was established by A. Fleck (cf. [D, p. 274]) in the case \( l = 0 \) and \( a = 1 \), by C. S. Weisman [We] in the case \( l = 0 \), and by D. Wan [W] in the general case motivated by his study of the \( \psi \)-operator related to Iwasawa theory.

**Theorem 1.0.** Let \( p \) be a prime and \( a \in \mathbb{Z}^+ \). Then, for any \( l, n \in \mathbb{N} = \{0, 1, 2, \ldots \} \) and \( r \in \mathbb{Z} \), we have

\[
C_{l, p^a}(n, r) := \sum_{k \equiv r \pmod{p^a}} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \left( \frac{(k - r)/p^a}{l} \right) \in p^l \left\lfloor \frac{n - a - 1 - lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor \mathbb{Z},
\]

where \( \phi \) is Euler’s totient function and \( \lfloor \cdot \rfloor \) is the greatest integer function.

The above integers \( C_{l, p^a}(n, r) \) \( (l = 0, 1, \ldots) \) arise naturally as the coefficients of the \( \psi \)-operator acting on the cyclotomic \( \varphi \)-module. We briefly review this connection. Let \( A = \mathbb{Z}_p[[T]] \) be the formal power series ring over the ring of \( p \)-adic integers. The \( \mathbb{Z}_p \)-linear Frobenius map \( \varphi \) acts on the ring \( A \) by

\[
\varphi(T) = (1 + T)^p - 1.
\]

Equivalently, \( \varphi(1 + T) = (1 + T)^p \). This map \( \varphi \) is injective and of degree \( p \). This implies that \( \{1, T, \ldots, T^{p-1}\} \) and \( \{1, 1 + T, \ldots, (1 + T)^{p-1}\} \) are bases of \( A \) over the subring \( \varphi(A) \). The operator \( \psi : A \to A \) is defined by

\[
\psi(x) = \psi \left( \sum_{i=0}^{p-1} (1 + T)^i \varphi(x_i) \right) = x_0 = \frac{1}{p} \varphi^{-1}(\text{Tr}_{A/\varphi(A)}(x)),
\]

where \( x : A \to A \) denotes the multiplication by \( x \) as a \( \varphi(A) \)-linear map. Note that \( \psi \) is a one-sided inverse of \( \varphi \), namely \( \psi \circ \varphi = I \neq \varphi \circ \psi \). The pair \( (A, \varphi) \) is the cyclotomic \( \varphi \)-module. The \( \psi \)-operator plays a basic role in \( L \)-functions of \( F \)-crystals, Fontaine’s theory of \((\varphi, \Gamma)\)-modules, Iwasawa theory, \( p \)-adic \( L \)-functions and \( p \)-adic Langlands correspondence.

For a positive integer \( a \), let \( \psi^a \) be the \( a \)-th iteration of \( \psi \) acting on the ring \( A \). As mentioned in [W, Lemma 4.2], it is easy to check that for any \( n \in \mathbb{N} \) and \( r \in \mathbb{Z} \) we have

\[
\psi^a \left( \frac{T^n}{(1 + T)^r} \right) = (-1)^n \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} T^l C_{l, p^a}(n, r).
\]

To understand the \( \psi^a \)-action, it is thus essential to understand the \( p \)-adic property of the cyclotomic \( \psi \)-coefficients \( C_{l, p^a}(n, r) \) \( (l = 0, 1, \ldots) \). This was the main motivation in [W], where the congruence in Theorem 1.0 was proved. Note that a somewhat weaker estimate for the cyclotomic \( \psi \)-coefficient \( C_{l, p}(n, 0) \) was independently given by Colmez [C, Lemma 1.7] in
his work on $p$-adic Langlands correspondence. The cyclotomic $\psi$-coefficient also arises from computing the homotopy $p$-exponent of the special unitary group $\text{SU}(n)$ (cf. [DS]).

To understand how sharp the congruence in Theorem 1.0 is, we define the normalized cyclotomic $\psi$-coefficient

$$\left\{ \frac{n}{r} \right\}_{l,p^a} := p^{-\left\lfloor \frac{n - \frac{a - 1}{\phi(p^a)} l p^a}{p^a} \right\rfloor} \sum_{k \equiv r (\text{mod } p^a)} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \left( \frac{(k - r)/p^a}{l} \right).$$

(1.0)

Surprisingly it has many properties similar to properties of the usual binomial coefficients.

The classical Lucas theorem states that if $p$ is a prime and $n, r, s, t$ are nonnegative integers with $s, t < p$ then

$$\binom{pn + s}{pr + t} \equiv \binom{n}{r} \binom{s}{t} \pmod{p}.$$

It can also be interpreted as a result about cellular automata (cf. [Gr]). There are various extensions of this fundamental theorem, see, e.g., [DW], [HS], [P] and [SD]. Our first result is the following new analogue of Lucas’ theorem.

**Theorem 1.1.** Let $p$ be any prime, and let $r \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $a, l, n, s, t \in \mathbb{N}$ with $a \geq 2$ and $s, t < p$. Then we have the congruence

$$\left\{ \frac{pn + s}{pr + t} \right\}_{l,p^a+1} \equiv (-1)^t \binom{s}{t} \left\{ \frac{n}{r} \right\}_{l,p^a} \pmod{p};$$

(1.1)

in other words,

$$p^{-\left\lfloor \frac{n - \frac{a - 1}{\phi(p^a)} l p^a}{p^a} \right\rfloor} \sum_{k \equiv r (\text{mod } p^a)} (-1)^k \left( \binom{pn + s}{pk + t} \left( \frac{(k - r)/p^a}{l} \right) \right) \equiv p^{-\left\lfloor \frac{n - \frac{a - 1}{\phi(p^a)} l p^a}{p^a} \right\rfloor} \sum_{k \equiv r (\text{mod } p^a)} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \binom{s}{t} \left( \frac{(k - r)/p^a}{l} \right) \pmod{p}.$$

**Remark 1.1.** Theorem 1.1 in the case $l = 0$ is equivalent to Theorem 1.7 of Z. W. Sun and D. M. Davis [SD]. Under the same conditions of Theorem 1.1, Sun and Davis [SD] established another congruence of Lucas’ type:

$$\frac{1}{[n/p^a-1]} \sum_{k \equiv r (\text{mod } p^a)} (-1)^k \left( \binom{pn + s}{pk + t} \left( \frac{(k - r)/p^a}{p^a-1} \right) \right)^t \equiv \frac{1}{[n/p^a-1]} \sum_{k \equiv r (\text{mod } p^a)} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \binom{s}{t} \left( \frac{(k - r)}{p^a-1} \right)^t \pmod{p}.$$
Note that $a \geq 2$ is assumed in Theorem 1.1. To get a complete result, we need to handle the case $a = 1$ as well, which is more subtle. In fact, concerning the exceptional case $a = 1$, Sun and Davis [SD] made the following conjecture (for $l = 0$). Note also that [S02] contains a closed formula for $\begin{pmatrix} n \\ r \end{pmatrix}_{0,2^a}$ with $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $r \in \mathbb{Z}$.

### Conjecture ([SD, Conjecture 1.2]). Let $p$ be any prime, and let $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $r \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $s \in \{0, \ldots, p-1\}$. If $p \mid n$ or $p-1 \nmid n-1$, then

$$\begin{pmatrix} pn + s \\ pr + t \end{pmatrix}_{l,p^2} \equiv (-1)^t \binom{s}{t} \binom{n}{r}_{l,p} \pmod{p}$$

for every $t = 0, \ldots, p-1$. When $p \nmid n$ and $p-1 \mid n-1$, the least nonnegative residue of $\begin{pmatrix} pn + s \\ pr + t \end{pmatrix}_{0,p^2}$ modulo $p$ does not depend on $r$ for each integer $t \in (s,p-1)$, moreover these residues form a permutation of $1, \ldots, p-1$ if $s = 0$ and $n \neq 1$.

We get the following general result for $a = 1$ and all $l \in \mathbb{N}$ from which the above conjecture follows.

### Theorem 1.2. Let $p$ be a prime, $l, n \in \mathbb{N}$, $r \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $s, t \in \{0, \ldots, p-1\}$. If $p \mid n$, or $p-1 \nmid n-l-1$, or $s = p-1$, or $s = 2t$ and $p \neq 2$, then

$$\begin{pmatrix} pn + s \\ pr + t \end{pmatrix}_{l,p^2} \equiv (-1)^t \binom{s}{t} \binom{n}{r}_{l,p} \pmod{p}. \tag{1.2}$$

When $p \nmid n$, $p-1 \mid n-l-1$ and $t \in (s,p-1)$, we have

$$\begin{pmatrix} pn + s \\ pr + t \end{pmatrix}_{l,p^2} \equiv \begin{cases} (-1)^{s+t} \frac{n^{a-1}}{p} \frac{n^a}{p^a-1} / \binom{t-1}{s} \pmod{p} & \text{if } n > l + 1, \\ 0 \pmod{p} & \text{if } n \leq l + 1. \end{cases} \tag{1.3}$$

From Theorem 1.2 we can also deduce the following result conjectured by Sun and Davis (cf. [SD, Remark 1.4]) as a complement to Theorem 1.5 of [SD].

### Corollary 1.3. Let $p$ be any prime, and let $l, n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $r \in \mathbb{Z}$. Then

$$T_{l,2}^{(p)}(n,r) \equiv (-1)^{\{r\}_p} \binom{n}{r}_p \binom{n}{r}_p \pmod{p}, \tag{1.4}$$

where

$$T_{l,a}^{(p)}(n,r) := \frac{l!p^l}{[n/p^a-1]!} \sum_{k \equiv r \pmod{p^a}} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \binom{(k-r)/p^a}{l}$$

for $a \in \mathbb{Z}^+$, and we use $\{x\}_m$ to denote the least nonnegative residue of an integer $x$ modulo $m \in \mathbb{Z}^+$.

When $s = t = 0$, the Lucas-type congruences in Theorems 1.1 and 1.2 can be further improved unless $p = 2$ and $2 \nmid n$. Namely, we have the following result.
Theorem 1.4. Let $p$ be a prime, and let $a, n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$, $l \in \mathbb{N}$ and $r \in \mathbb{Z}$. Then

$$\text{ord}_p \left( \binom{pn}{pr}_{l,p^{a+1}} - \binom{n}{r}_{l,p^a} \right) \geq \frac{p - 1}{p} \left( 2 \text{ord}_p(n) + \delta \right),$$

(1.5)

where $\text{ord}_p(n) = \sup \{ m \in \mathbb{N} : p^m \mid n \}$ and

$$\delta = \begin{cases} 
0 & \text{if } p = 2, \\
1 & \text{if } p = 3, \\
2 & \text{if } p \geq 5.
\end{cases}$$

Remark 1.2. Let $p$ be a prime, $a, n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ and $r \in \mathbb{Z}$. Substituting $p^{a-1}n$ for $n$ in (1.5), we obtain that

$$\text{ord}_p \left( \binom{p^{a}n}{pr}_{0,p^{a+1}} - \binom{p^{a-1}n}{r}_{0,p^a} \right) \geq \frac{p - 1}{p} \left( 2 \text{ord}_p(p^{a-1}n) + \delta \right) \geq \frac{p - 1}{p} \left( 2(a - 1) + \delta \right).$$

On the other hand, in the case $l = 0$ Sun and Davis [SD, Theorem 3.1] proved the congruence

$$\left. \left\{ p^a n \right\}_{0,p^{a+1}} \equiv \left\{ p^{a-1} n \right\}_{0,p^a} \pmod{p^{(2-\delta_{p,2})(a-1)}} \right.$$ (where the Kronecker symbol $\delta_{i,j}$ takes 1 or 0 according as $i = j$ or not) and they conjectured that the exponent $(2 - \delta_{p,2})(a - 1)$ can be replaced by $2a - \delta_{p,3} = 2(a - 1) + \delta$ when $p \neq 2$.

Here is one more result, which shows that Theorem 1.0 is often sharp.

Theorem 1.5. Let $p$ be any prime, and let $a \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ and $l \in \mathbb{N}$. If $n = (l + 1)p^{a-1} - 1 + m\phi(p^a)$ for some $m \in \mathbb{Z}^+$, then

$$\left. \binom{n}{r}_{l,p^a} \equiv (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m-1}{l} \pmod{p} \right. \quad \text{for all } r \in \mathbb{Z}.$$ (1.6)

Remark 1.3. Theorem 1.5 in the case $l = 0$ was first obtained by Weisman [We] in 1977. Given $l \in \mathbb{Z}^+$, for any integer $m > l$ with $m \equiv l + 1 \pmod{p^\lfloor \log_p l \rfloor + 1}$ we have $\binom{m-1}{l} \equiv \binom{l}{l} = 1 \pmod{p}$ by Lucas’ theorem.

In the next section we include a new proof of Theorem 1.0 of a combinatorial nature. In Section 3 we will show Theorem 1.1. Theorems 1.2 and Corollary 1.3 will be proved in Section 4. Section 5 is devoted to proofs of Theorems 1.4 and 1.5. Instead of the $\psi$-operator, we use combinatorial arguments throughout this paper.
2. A combinatorial proof of Theorem 1.0

Lemma 2.1. Let $a, b \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $m \in \mathbb{Z}^+$. Then

\[ \left\lfloor \frac{a}{m} \right\rfloor + \left\lfloor \frac{b}{m} \right\rfloor + 1 - \left\lfloor \frac{a+b+1}{m} \right\rfloor \in \{0, 1\}. \]  \hfill (2.1)

Proof. Observe that

\[ \left\lfloor \frac{a+b+1}{m} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \frac{a}{m} \right\rfloor + \left\lfloor \frac{b}{m} \right\rfloor + \left\lfloor \frac{\{a\}m + \{b\}m + 1}{m} \right\rfloor. \]

The last term is obviously either 0 or 1, so (2.1) follows. \qed

Lemma 2.2. Let $l, m, n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ and $r \in \mathbb{Z}$. Then we have

\[ \sum_{k \equiv r \pmod{m}} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \left( \begin{array}{c} (k-r)/m \\ l \end{array} \right) - \left( \begin{array}{c} \lfloor (n-r)/m \rfloor \\ l \end{array} \right) \sum_{m|k-r} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \left( \begin{array}{c} (k-r)/m \\ l \end{array} \right), \]

where $r_j = r - j + m - 1$.

Proof. Note that \( \binom{x+1}{l} - \binom{x}{l} = \binom{x}{l-1} \). So Lemma 2.2 is just Lemma 3.3 of [DS] in the case $f(x) = \binom{x}{l}$. \qed

Proof of Theorem 1.0. We use induction on $l + n$.

The case $n = 0$ is trivial. The case $l = 0$ was handled by Weisman [W] (see also [S06]).

Now let $l$ and $n$ be positive, and assume that $\left\{ \binom{n'}{r'} \right\}_{l', p^a} \in \mathbb{Z}$ whenever $l', n' \in \mathbb{N}$, $l' + n' < l + n$ and $r' \in \mathbb{Z}$. By Lemma 2.2,

\[ \left\{ \binom{n}{r} \right\}_{l, p^a} - \left( \begin{array}{c} n-r^{-1} \\ p^a \end{array} \right) p\left[ \left\lfloor \frac{n-p^a-1}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor - \left\lfloor \frac{n-p^a-1- lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor \right] \left\{ \binom{n}{r} \right\}_{0, p^a} \]

where

\[ c_j = \left[ \frac{j-p^a-1}{\phi(p^a)} \right] + \left[ \frac{n-j-1-p^a-1-(l-1)p^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right] - \left[ \frac{n-p^a-1-lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right] \]

\[ = \left[ \frac{a_j}{\phi(p^a)} \right] + \left[ \frac{b_j}{\phi(p^a)} \right] + 1 - \left[ \frac{a_j+b_j+1}{\phi(p^a)} \right] \geq 0 \] (by Lemma 2.1)
with \( a_j = j - p^{a-1} \) and \( b_j = n - j - 1 - lp^a \). For any \( j = 0, 1, \ldots, n - 1 \), both \( \{j\}_0, p^a \) and \( \{n-j-1\}_l, p^a \) are integers by the induction hypothesis. Therefore \( \{n\}_l, p^a \in \mathbb{Z} \) by the above.

The induction proof of Theorem 1.0 is now complete. \(\square\)

**Remark 2.1.** Our proof of Theorem 1.0 can be refined to show the following recurrence with respect to \( l \): If \( p \) is a prime, \( a, l, n \in \mathbb{Z}^+ \) and \( r \in \mathbb{Z} \), then

\[
\left\{ \frac{n}{r} \right\}_{l,p^a} \equiv -\sum_{j \in J} \left( \frac{n}{j} \right) \left( \frac{j}{r} \right)_{0,p^a} \left\{ \frac{n - j - 1}{r - j + p^a - 1} \right\}_{l-1,p^a} \pmod{p},
\]

where

\[
J = \{0 \leq j \leq n - 1 : \{j - p^{a-1}\}_{\phi(p^a)} \geq \{n - (l + 1)p^{a-1}\}_{\phi(p^a)}\}.
\]

3. Proof of Theorem 1.1

We can deduce Theorem 1.1 by using Remark 2.1 along with Theorem 1.7 of [SD]. However, we will present a self-contained proof by a new approach.

**Lemma 3.1.** Let \( d, q \in \mathbb{Z}^+, n \in \mathbb{N}, r, t \in \mathbb{Z} \) and \( t < d \). Then

\[
\sum_{j \in \mathbb{N}} (-1)^j \left( \frac{n}{d|k-t} \right) \left( \frac{n}{k} \right) \left( \frac{(k-t)/d}{j} \right) \left( \sum_{q|\phi(r)} (-1)^{j/(i-r)/q} \left( \frac{j}{i} \right) \left( \frac{(i-r)/l}{q} \right) \right) = \sum_{k \equiv dq+t \pmod{dq}} (-1)^k \left( \frac{n}{k} \right) \left( \frac{(k-dr-t)/(dq)}{l} \right). \tag{3.1}
\]

**Proof.** Since \( t < d \), we have \( (k-t)/d \in \mathbb{N} \) for those \( k \in \{0, \ldots, n\} \) with \( k \equiv t \pmod{d} \). Let \( S \) denote the left-hand side of (3.1). Then

\[
S = \sum_{k \equiv t \pmod{d}} (-1)^k \left( \frac{n}{k} \right) \sum_{q|\phi(r)} \left( \frac{(i-r)/q}{l} \right) \sum_{j \geq i} (-1)^{j-i} \left( \frac{(k-t)/d}{j} \left( \frac{j}{i} \right) \right).
\]

The inner-most sum has a well-known evaluation (see, e.g., [G, (3.47)] or [GKP, (5.24)]); in fact, it coincides with

\[
\left( \frac{(k-t)/d}{i} \right) \sum_{j \geq i} (-1)^{j-i} \left( \frac{(k-t)/d - i}{j - i} \right) = \delta_{i,(k-t)/d}.
\]
Therefore

\[
S = \sum_{k \equiv t \mod d} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \sum_{q | i-r} \binom{(i-r)/q}{l} \delta_{i,(k-t)/d}
\]

\[
= \sum_{k \equiv dr+t \mod dq} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \left( \frac{(k-t)/d-r}{q} \right)
\]

\[
= \sum_{k \equiv dr+t \mod dq} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \left( \frac{(k-dr-t)/(dq)}{l} \right).
\]

This concludes the proof. ∎

**Lemma 3.2.** Let \( p \) be a prime, and let \( a \in \mathbb{Z}^+ \) and \( l, n \in \mathbb{N} \). Let \( r \in \mathbb{Z} \) and \( s, t \in \{0, 1, \ldots, p-1\} \). If \( n = 0 \) or \( s = p - 1 \) or \( \phi(p^a) \nmid n - (l+1)p^{a-1} \), then (1.1) holds; otherwise,

\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{c}
pn + s \\
pr + t \end{array} \right\}_{l,p^a+1} \equiv (-1)^{n-1} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
n - 1 \\
r \end{array} \right\}_{l,p^a} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
pn + s \\
t \end{array} \right\}_{n-1,p} \mod p.
\]

**Proof.** Applying Lemma 3.1 with \( d = p \) and \( q = p^a \), we find that

\[
\sum_{j \in \mathbb{N}} (-1)^j p^{\left[ \frac{pn+s-1-jp}{\phi(p)} \right]} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
pn + s \\
pr + t \end{array} \right\}_{l,p^a+1} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
j \\
r \end{array} \right\}_{j,p} p^{\left[ \frac{j-p^{a-1}-lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right]} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
j \\
r \end{array} \right\}_{l,p^a}
\]

\[
= p^{\left[ \frac{pn+s-p^a-1}{\phi(p^a+1)} \right]} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
pn + s \\
pr + t \end{array} \right\}_{l,p^a+1}.
\]

Thus

\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{c}
pn + s \\
pr + t \end{array} \right\}_{l,p^a+1} = \sum_{0 \leq j \leq \left[ \frac{pn+s}{p} \right] = n} (-1)^j p^{\alpha_j} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
j \\
r \end{array} \right\}_{j,p} \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
pn + s \\
t \end{array} \right\}_{j,p},
\]

where

\[
\alpha_j = \left[ \frac{pn+s-1-jp}{\phi(p)} \right] + \left[ \frac{j-p^{a-1}-lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right] - \left[ \frac{pn+s-p^a-1}{\phi(p^a+1)} \right] - \left[ \frac{n-p^{a-1}-lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right].
\]
Observe that
\[
\begin{align*}
p^{a_n} \left\{ \frac{pn + s}{t} \right\}_{n,p} &= \sum_{k \equiv t \pmod{p}} (-1)^k \binom{pn + s}{k} \binom{(k - t)/p}{n} \\
&= (-1)^{pn + t} \binom{pn + s}{pn + t} \binom{(pn + t - t)/p}{n} \\
&\equiv (-1)^{n + t} \binom{s}{t} \pmod{p}
\end{align*}
\]
where we have applied Lucas' theorem in the last step.

When \( n \) is positive, clearly
\[
a_{n-1} - \left\lfloor \frac{s}{p - 1} \right\rfloor = 1 + \left\lfloor \frac{n - 1 - p^{a-1} - lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor - \left\lfloor \frac{n - p^{a-1} - lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor
\]
\[
= \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if } n \not\equiv p^{a-1} + lp^a \equiv (l + 1)p^{a-1} \pmod{\phi(p^a)}, \\
0 & \text{otherwise}.
\end{cases}
\]

Let \( 0 \leq j \leq n - 2 \). We will see that \( a_j \geq n - j - 1 \geq 1 \). Since
\[
p^a(n - j) + p^{a-1}(s - 1) - (n - j)\phi(p^a) = p^{a-1}(n - j + s - 1) \geq n - j - 1,
\]
we have
\[
\left\lfloor \frac{p(n - j) + s - 1}{\phi(p)} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \frac{p^a(n - j) + p^{a-1}(s - 1)}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor \geq \left\lfloor \frac{n - j - 1}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor + n - j
\]
and therefore
\[
a_j \geq \left\lfloor \frac{n - j - 1}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor + n - j + \left\lfloor \frac{j - p^{a-1} - lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor - \left\lfloor \frac{n - p^{a-1} - lp^a}{\phi(p^a)} \right\rfloor \geq n - j - 1
\]
by applying Lemma 2.1.

Combining the above we immediately obtain the desired result. □

**Lemma 3.3.** Let \( p \) be a prime, \( n \in \mathbb{Z}^+ \), \( r \in \mathbb{Z} \) and \( s, t \in \{0, \ldots, p - 1\} \) with \( s \not\equiv p - 1 \). If \( s < t \) then
\[
\left\{ \frac{pn + s}{t} \right\}_{n-1,p} \equiv (-1)^{n+s} \frac{n}{t(t-1)} \pmod{p}.
\]
If \( s \geq t \), then
\[
\left\{ \frac{pn + s}{t} \right\}_{n-1,p} \equiv (-1)^{n+t} n \binom{t}{s} \frac{\sigma_{st}}{p} \pmod{p},
\]
where \( \sigma_{st} \) is the Stirling number of the second kind.
where
\[
\sigma_{st} = 1 + (-1)^p \frac{\prod_{1 \leq i \leq p, i \neq p-t} (p(n-1) + t + i)}{\prod_{1 \leq i \leq p, i \neq p-(s-t)} (s-t+i)} \equiv 1 + (-1)^p \equiv 0 \pmod{p}.
\]

Proof. Clearly
\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
bn + s \\
t
\end{array} \right\}_{n-1,p} = p^{-\left[ \frac{bn + s - 1 - (n-1)p}{p-1} \right]} \sum_{k \equiv t \pmod{p}} (-1)^k \binom{bn + s}{k} \left( \frac{(k-t)/p}{n-1} \right)
\]
\[
= \frac{(-1)^{pn+t}}{p} \binom{bn + s}{pn + t} \left( \frac{n}{n-1} \right)
+ \frac{(-1)^{p(n-1)+t}}{p} \binom{bn + s}{p(n-1) + t} \left( \frac{n-1}{n-1} \right).
\]

Case 1. $s < t$. In this case, $d = t - 1 - s \geq 0$ and
\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
bn + s \\
t
\end{array} \right\}_{n-1,p} = \frac{(-1)^{p(n-1)+t}}{p} \prod_{i=0}^{s} \frac{pn + i}{p(n-1) + t - i} \left( \frac{p(n-1) + p - 1}{p(n-1) + d} \right)
\]
\[
= \frac{(-1)^{p(n-1)+t}}{p} \prod_{i=1}^{s} \frac{pn + i}{p(n-1) + t - i} \left( \frac{p(n-1) + p - 1}{p(n-1) + d} \right)
\equiv (-1)^{n-1+t} \frac{n \times s!}{\prod_{i=0}^{s} (t-i)} \left( \frac{p-1}{d} \right) \pmod{p}.
\]

Case 2. $s \geq t$. Note that
\[
\sigma_{st} \equiv 1 + (-1)^p \frac{(p-1)!}{(p-1)!} \equiv 1 + (-1)^p \equiv 0 \pmod{p}
\]
and
\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
bn + s \\
t
\end{array} \right\}_{n-1,p} = \frac{(-1)^{pn+t}}{p} \binom{bn + s}{pn + t} \left( n + (-1)^p \prod_{i=1}^{p} \frac{p(n-1) + t + i}{s-t+i} \right)
\]
\[
= \frac{(-1)^{pn+t}}{p} \binom{bn + s}{pn + t} \sigma_{st}.
\]

Therefore
\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
bn + s \\
t
\end{array} \right\}_{n-1,p} \equiv (-1)^{n+t} \frac{n \sigma_{st}}{p} \pmod{p}
\]
by Lucas’ theorem.

The proof of Lemma 3.3 is now complete. □

Proof of Theorem 1.1. If \( n = 0 \) or \( s = p - 1 \) or \( \phi(p^a) \nmid n - (l + 1)p^{a-1} \), then (1.1) holds by Lemma 3.2.

Now we suppose that \( n > 0, s \neq p - 1 \) and \( \phi(p^a) \mid n - (l + 1)p^{a-1} \). Then \( p^{a-1} \mid n \), and hence \( p \mid n \) since \( a \geq 2 \). Therefore \( \{ \binom{pn+s}{t} \}_{n-1,p} \equiv 0 \) (mod \( p \)) by Lemma 3.3, and thus we have (1.1) by (3.2).

This concludes the proof. □

4. Proofs of Theorem 1.2 and Corollary 1.3

Lemma 4.1. Let \( p \) be a prime, and let \( a \in \mathbb{Z}^+, l \in \mathbb{N} \) and \( r \in \mathbb{Z} \). Then, for any \( n \in \mathbb{N} \) with \( n \equiv l \) (mod \( p-1 \)), we have

\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{ll}
\binom{n}{r} & \equiv \left( (-1)^{\frac{n-l}{p-1} - 1} \right) \left( \frac{n-l}{l} \right) \quad \text{if } n > l, \\
0 & \quad \text{if } n \leq l.
\end{array} \right. \tag{4.1}
\]

Proof. We use induction on \( m = (n-l)/(p-1) \).

If \( m \leq l \) (i.e., \( n \leq lp \)), then \( (n-lp-1)/(p-1) \) < 0, and hence

\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{ll}
\binom{n}{r} & \equiv (p-1)^{\frac{n-l}{p-1}} \sum_{k \equiv r \pmod{p}} (-1)^{k} \binom{n}{k} \binom{(k-r)/p}{l} \equiv 0 \pmod{p}
\end{array} \right. \]

which yields (4.1). If \( l < m \leq 1 \), then \( l = 0 \) and \( m = 1 \), hence \( n = p - 1 \) and

\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{ll}
\binom{n}{r} & \equiv \sum_{k \equiv r \pmod{p}} \binom{p-1}{k} (-1)^{k} \equiv 1 = (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m-1}{l} \pmod{p}.
\end{array} \right.
\]

Thus the desired result always holds in the case \( m \leq \max \{ l, 1 \} \).

Now let \( n > \max \{ l, 1 \} \) and assume that whenever \( l_*, n_* \in \mathbb{N} \) and \( (n_* - l_*)/(p-1) = m-1 > 0 \) we have

\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{ll}
\binom{n_*}{i} & \equiv (-1)^{\frac{n_*-l_*}{p-1} - 1} \left( \frac{n_*-l_*}{l_*} - 1 \right) \equiv (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m-1}{l_*} \pmod{p}
\end{array} \right. \]

for all \( i \in \mathbb{Z} \).

For \( n' = n - (p-1) \) clearly \( (n' - l)/(p-1) = m - 1 \geq \max \{ l, 1 \} \). By the induction hypothesis, \( \left\{ \binom{n'}{i} \right\}_{l,p} \equiv (-1)^m \binom{m-2}{l} \pmod{p} \) for each \( i \in \mathbb{Z} \).

In view of the Chu-Vandermonde convolution identity (cf. [GKP, (5.27)]),

\[
\binom{n}{k} = \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \binom{p-1}{j} \binom{n'}{k-j}
\]
for every $k = 0, 1, 2, \ldots$. Therefore

\[
\left\{ n \atop r \right\}_{l,p} = p^{-\left\lfloor \frac{n'-lp-1}{p-1} \right\rfloor} \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \binom{p-1}{j} \sum_{p|k-r} (-1)^k \binom{n'}{k-j} \left( \frac{(k-r)/p}{l} \right)
\]

\[
= \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \binom{p-1}{j} \frac{(-1)^j}{p} \left\{ n' \atop r-j \right\}_{l,p}
\]

\[
= \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \binom{p-1}{j} (-1)^j \frac{\left\{ n' \atop r-j \right\}_{l,p} - (-1)^m \binom{m-2}{l}}{p},
\]

since $\sum_{j=0}^{p-1} (-1)^j = (1 - 1)^{p-1} = 0$. Thus

\[
\left\{ n \atop r \right\}_{l,p} \equiv \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \frac{\left\{ n' \atop r-j \right\}_{l,p} - (-1)^m \binom{m-2}{l}}{p} \pmod{p}.
\]

Observe that

\[
p^{\left\lfloor \frac{n'-lp-1}{p-1} \right\rfloor} \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \left\{ n' \atop r-j \right\}_{l,p}
\]

\[
= \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \sum_{k \equiv r-j \pmod{p}} (-1)^k \binom{n'}{k} \left( \frac{(k-(r-j))/p}{l} \right)
\]

\[
= \sum_{k=0}^{n'} (-1)^k \binom{n'}{k} \left( \frac{(k+r+p-1)/p}{l} \right)
\]

\[
= \begin{cases} 
\sum_{k=0}^{n'} (-1)^k \binom{n'}{k} = (1 - 1)^{n'} = 0 & \text{if } l = 0, \\
- \sum_{k \equiv r \pmod{p}} (-1)^k \binom{n'-1}{k} \left( \frac{(k-r)/p}{l-1} \right) & \text{if } l > 0,
\end{cases}
\]

where we have applied Lemma 2.1 of Sun [S06] to get the last equality. Also,

\[
\left\lfloor \frac{n' - 1 - (l - 1)p - 1}{p - 1} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \frac{n' - lp - 1}{p - 1} \right\rfloor + 1
\]

and

\[
\frac{n' - 1 - (l - 1)}{p - 1} = m - 1.
\]

Therefore

\[
\frac{1}{p} \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \left\{ n' \atop r-j \right\}_{l,p} = \begin{cases} 
0 & \text{if } l = 0, \\
-\left\{ n'-1 \atop r \right\}_{l-1,p} & \text{if } l > 0,
\end{cases}
\]

\[
\equiv (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m-2}{l-1} \pmod{p} \text{ (by the induction hypothesis)}.\]
Combining the above we finally obtain that

\[
\left\{ \frac{n}{r} \right\}_{l,p} \equiv \frac{1}{p} \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \left\{ \frac{n'}{r-j} \right\}_{l,p} - (-1)^m \binom{m-2}{l} \\
\equiv (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m-2}{l-1} + (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m-2}{l} \\
\equiv (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m-1}{l} \pmod{p}.
\]

This concludes the induction proof. □

Proof of Theorem 1.2. By Lemma 3.2, if \( s = p - 1 \), or \( \phi(p) = p - 1 \) does not divide \( n - l - 1 \), then (1.2) holds. If \( s \neq p - 1 \) and \( p \mid n \), then we also have (1.2) by Lemmas 3.2 and 3.3. Below we assume that \( s \neq p - 1 \), \( p - 1 \mid n - l - 1 \) and \( p \nmid n \).

When \( s = 2t \), clearly

\[
\sigma_{st} = 1 + (-1)^p \prod_{1 \leq i \leq p \atop i \neq p-t} \left( 1 + \frac{p(n-1)}{t+i} \right) \\
\equiv 1 + (-1)^p \left( 1 + p(n-1) \sum_{1 \leq i \leq p \atop i \neq p-t} \frac{1}{t+i} \right) \equiv p \delta_{p,2} \pmod{p^2},
\]

for, \( n \) is odd if \( p = 2 \), and

\[
\sum_{1 \leq i \leq p \atop i \neq p-t} \frac{1}{t+i} \equiv \sum_{1 \leq k \leq p} \frac{1}{k} = \sum_{1 \leq k \leq p} \left( \frac{1}{k} + \frac{1}{p-k} \right) \equiv 0 \pmod{p}
\]

if \( p \neq 2 \). Therefore, in the case \( s = 2t \) and \( p \neq 2 \), we have (1.2) by Lemmas 3.2 and 3.3.

Now we consider the case \( s < t \). By Lemmas 3.2, 3.3 and 4.1,

\[
\left\{ \frac{pn+s}{pr+t} \right\}_{l,p^2} \equiv (-1)^{n-1} \left\{ \frac{pn+s}{t} \right\}_{n-1,p} \left\{ \frac{n-1}{r} \right\}_{l,p} \\
\equiv (-1)^{n-1} (-1)^{n+s} \frac{n}{t(t-1)} \\
\times \left\{ (-1)^{\frac{n-1-l}{p-1}-1} \left( \frac{n-1-l}{l} \right) \pmod{p} \text{ if } n-1 > l, \right. \\
\left. 0 \pmod{p} \text{ if } n-1 \leq l. \right\}
\]

In view of the above we have completed the proof of Theorem 1.2. □
Proof of Corollary 1.3. We just modify the third case in the proof of Theorem 1.5 of [SD]. The only thing we require is that in the case \( n > 0 \) and \( n \equiv r \equiv 0 \pmod{p} \) we still have

\[
T_{0,2}^{(p)}(n, r) = \frac{p^{\left\lfloor \frac{n}{p} - 1 \right\rfloor}}{(n/p)!} \begin{pmatrix} n \\ r \end{pmatrix}_{0,p^2} \equiv \frac{p^{\left\lfloor \frac{n}{p} - 1 \right\rfloor}}{n_0!} \begin{pmatrix} n_0 \\ r_0 \end{pmatrix}_{0,p} = T_{0,1}^{(p)}(n_0, r_0) \pmod{p}
\]

where \( n_0 = n/p \) and \( r_0 = r/p \). Note that

\[
\text{ord}_p(n_0!) = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \left\lfloor \frac{n_0}{p^i} \right\rfloor < \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \frac{n_0}{p^i} = \frac{n_0}{p - 1}
\]

and thus \( \text{ord}_p(n_0!) \leq \lfloor (n_0 - 1)/(p - 1) \rfloor \).

If \( p \neq 2 \), then by applying (1.2) with \( l = s = t = 0 \) we find that

\[
\begin{pmatrix} n \\ r \end{pmatrix}_{0,p^2} = \begin{pmatrix} pn_0 \\ pr_0 \end{pmatrix}_{0,p^2} \equiv \begin{pmatrix} n_0 \\ r_0 \end{pmatrix}_{0,p} \pmod{p}
\]

and so \( T_{0,2}^{(p)}(n, r) \equiv T_{0,1}^{(p)}(n_0, r_0) \pmod{p} \). The last congruence also holds when \( p = 2 \), because by Lemma 4.2 of [SD] we have

\[
2 \mid T_{0,2}^{(2)}(n, r) \iff n = 2n_0 \text{ is a power of } 2 \iff 2 \mid T_{0,1}^{(2)}(n_0, r_0).
\]

This concludes the proof. \( \square \)

5. Proofs of Theorems 1.4 and 1.5

Proof of Theorem 1.4. By Lemma 3.2 of [SD] and its proof, if \( j \in \mathbb{N} \) then

\[
\sum_{k \equiv 0 \pmod{p}} (-1)^k \binom{pn}{k/p} \binom{k/p}{j} = \sum_{j \leq k \leq n} (-1)^{pk} \binom{pn}{pk} \binom{k}{j}
\]

is congruent to

\[
\sum_{j \leq k \leq n} (-1)^k \binom{n}{k} \binom{k}{j} = \binom{n}{j} \sum_{k \geq j} (-1)^k \binom{n-j}{k-j} = (-1)^j \delta_{j,n}
\]

modulo \( p^{2\text{ord}_p(n) + 1 + \delta} \). Therefore

\[
\text{ord}_p \left( \binom{pn}{0}_{j,p} \right) \geq 2\text{ord}_p(n) + 1 + \delta - \left\lfloor \frac{pn - jp - 1}{p - 1} \right\rfloor
\]
for any \( j \in \mathbb{N} \) with \( j \neq n \). As in the proof of Lemma 3.2,

\[
\left\{ \frac{pn}{pr} \right\}_{l,p^{a+1}} = (-1)^n (-1)^{pn} \left\{ \frac{n}{r} \right\}_{l,p^a} + \sum_{0 \leq j < n} (-1)^j p^{a_j} \left\{ \frac{j}{r} \right\}_{l,p^a} \left\{ \frac{pn}{0} \right\}_{j,p}
\]

where \( a_j \in \mathbb{Z} \) and \( a_j \geq n - j - 1 \).

Let \( m \) be the least integer greater than or equal to \( \frac{p-1}{p}(2\text{ord}_p(n) + \delta) \).

Then \( m - 1 < \frac{p-1}{p}(2\text{ord}_p(n) + \delta) \) and hence

\[
m + \left\lfloor \frac{m-1}{p-1} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \frac{p(m-1)}{p-1} \right\rfloor + 1 \leq 2\text{ord}_p(n) + \delta.
\]

For \( 0 \leq j < n \), if \( n - j \geq m + 1 \) then \( a_j \geq n - j - 1 \geq m \); if \( n - j \leq m \) then

\[
a_j + \text{ord}_p\left(\left\{ \frac{pn}{0} \right\}_{j,p}\right) \geq n - j - 1 + 2\text{ord}_p(n) + 1 + \delta - \left\lfloor \frac{p(n-j)-1}{p-1} \right\rfloor
\]

\[
= 2\text{ord}_p(n) + \delta - \left\lfloor \frac{n-j-1}{p-1} \right\rfloor
\]

\[
\geq 2\text{ord}_p(n) + \delta - \left\lfloor \frac{m-1}{p-1} \right\rfloor \geq m.
\]

Combining the above we get that

\[
\text{ord}_p\left(\left\{ \frac{pn}{pr} \right\}_{l,p^{a+1}} - (-1)^{p-1}n \left\{ \frac{n}{r} \right\}_{l,p^a}\right) \geq m \geq \frac{p-1}{p}(2\text{ord}_p(n) + \delta).
\]

If \((p-1)n\) is odd, then \( p = 2 \) and \( 2 \nmid n \), hence \( 2\text{ord}_p(n) + \delta = 0 \). So (1.5) holds. \( \square \)

**Proof of Theorem 1.5.** We use induction on \( a \).

When \( a = 1 \), the desired result follows from Lemma 4.1.

In the case \( a = 2 \), by Theorem 1.2 and Lemma 4.1, we have

\[
\left\{ \frac{n}{r} \right\}_{l,p^2} = \left\{ \frac{p(l + m(p-1))}{p[r/p] + \{r\}_p} \right\}_{l,p^2}
\]

\[
\equiv (-1)^{\{r\}_p} \left\{ \frac{p-1}{\{r\}_p} \right\}_{l,p^2} \left\{ \frac{l + m(p-1)}{[r/p]} \right\}_{l,p^2} \equiv \left\{ \frac{l + m(p-1)}{[r/p]} \right\}_{l,p}
\]

\[
\equiv (-1)^{m-1} \left( \frac{m-1}{l} \right) \pmod{p}.
\]
Now let $a > 2$ and assume Theorem 1.5 with $a$ replaced by $a - 1$. Then, with helps of Theorem 1.1 and the induction hypothesis, we have

\[
\binom{n}{r}_{l,p^a} \equiv \binom{p^{a-1}(l + m(p - 1) + 1) - 1}{r}_{l,p^a} = \binom{p(p^{a-2}(l + m(p - 1) + 1) - 1) + (p - 1)}{p \lfloor r/p \rfloor + \{r\}_p}_{l,p^a} \\
\equiv (-1)^{\{r\}_p} \binom{p - 1}{\{r\}_p} \binom{p^{a-2}(l + m(p - 1) + 1) - 1}{\lfloor r/p \rfloor}_{l,p^a-1} \\
\equiv \binom{(l + 1)p^{a-2} - 1 + m\phi(p^{a-1})}{\lfloor r/p \rfloor}_{l,p^a-1} \\
\equiv (-1)^{m-1} \binom{m - 1}{l} \pmod{p}.
\]

This concludes the induction step and we are done. □

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