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Fundamental solution, eigenvalue asymptotics  
 and eigenfunctions of degenerate elliptic operators  
 with positive potentials

by

KAZUHIRO KURATA and SATOKO SUGANO (Tokyo)

**Abstract.** We show a weighted version of Fefferman-Phong's inequality and apply it to give an estimate of fundamental solutions, eigenvalue asymptotics and exponential decay of eigenfunctions for certain degenerate elliptic operators of second order with positive potentials.

**1. Introduction and main results.** In [Sh1] Shen studied  $L^p$  boundedness of the operators  $VL^{-1}$ ,  $V^{1/2}L^{-1/2}$ ,  $\nabla^2L^{-1}$  for the Schrödinger operator  $L = -\Delta + V$  with certain positive potentials  $V$ . Here  $L^{-1}$  is an integral operator with the minimal Green function (or minimal fundamental function) for  $L$  as its integral kernel (see e.g. [Mu], [Sm]). In [KS] we extended Shen's results to uniformly elliptic operators  $L$  and gave a simple proof of some part of his results. In particular our estimates imply boundedness of several operators on weighted  $L^p$  spaces and Morrey spaces. Furthermore, in [Su] Sugano investigated several estimates for the operators  $V^\alpha(-\Delta + V)^{-\beta}$  and  $V^\alpha\nabla(-\Delta + V)^{-\beta}$  by using arguments as in [Sh1] and [KS]. In [Sh2] Shen also studied eigenvalue asymptotics and exponential decay of eigenfunctions. The main ingredients of his work are the function  $m(x, V)$  introduced to control the fundamental solution of  $L$  and Fefferman-Phong's inequality associated with this weight  $m(x, V)$ .

The purpose of this paper is to show a weighted version of Fefferman-Phong's inequality and its applications. The first application is to give an estimate of fundamental solutions of the following degenerate elliptic operators with positive potentials:

$$L = -\nabla(A(x)\nabla) + V(x),$$

where  $V(x) \geq 0$ ,  $A(x) = (a_{ij}(x))_{i,j=1}^n$  and  $a_{ij}(x)$  is a measurable function

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satisfying

$$(1) \quad \mu w(x)|\xi|^2 \leq \sum_{i,j=1}^n a_{ij}(x)\xi_i\xi_j \leq \mu^{-1}w(x)|\xi|^2, \quad \xi \in \mathbb{R}^n,$$

for some positive constant  $\mu \in (0, 1]$  and a non-negative measurable function  $w$ . The second application is to show the eigenvalue asymptotics and exponential decay of eigenfunctions of the operator

$$H = -\frac{1}{w} \operatorname{div}(A(x)\nabla) + U(x)$$

on  $L^2(wdx)$ , where  $U \geq 0$ . Throughout this paper we assume that  $w$  satisfies the so-called  $A_2$  condition of Muckenhoupt.

DEFINITION 1. We say  $w \in A_2$  if there exists a constant  $C$  such that

$$\left( \frac{1}{|B|} \int_B w(x) dx \right) \left( \frac{1}{|B|} \int_B w(x)^{-1} dx \right) \leq C$$

for every ball  $B \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ .

We show the following estimate for the fundamental solution  $\Gamma_w(x, y; V)$  of  $L$  under certain conditions on  $V$ : for every  $k > 0$  there exists a constant  $C_k$  such that

$$\Gamma_w(x, y; V) \leq \frac{C_k}{(1 + m_w(x, V/w)|x - y|)^k} \cdot \frac{|x - y|^2}{w(B(x, |x - y|))},$$

where  $B(x, r) = \{y \in \mathbb{R}^n : |x - y| < r\}$ ,  $w(B) = \int_B w(z) dz$  and  $m_w(x, U)$  is defined by

$$\frac{1}{m_w(x, U)} = \sup \left\{ r > 0 : \frac{r^2}{w(B(x, r))} \int_{B(x, r)} U(y)w(y) dy \leq 1 \right\}.$$

This type of estimate was first established by Shen [Sh1] for  $L = -\Delta + V$  (see also [Zh]). By using this estimate, we can obtain the boundedness of the operator  $VL^{-1}$  on various spaces.

We also assume  $U(x) \geq 0$  throughout this paper. We define the potential class  $(RH)_q(w)$  which will be considered in this paper.

DEFINITION 2. (1) For  $1 < q < \infty$  we say  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  if there exists a constant  $C$  such that

$$(2) \quad \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U(x)^q w(x) dx \right)^{1/q} \leq \frac{C}{w(B)} \int_B U(x)w(x) dx$$

for every ball  $B \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ . If the inequality only holds for balls with radius less than or equal to 1, then we say  $U \in (RH)_{q, \text{loc}}(w)$ .

(2) We say  $U \in (RH)_\infty(w)$  if there exists a constant  $C$  such that

$$\sup_{x \in B} |U(x)| \leq \frac{C}{w(B)} \int_B U(x)w(x) dx$$

for every ball  $B \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ .

Note that Hölder's inequality yields  $(RH)_\infty(w) \subset (RH)_q(w)$  for  $1 < q < \infty$ . It is well known that if  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$ , then  $U \in (RH)_{q+\varepsilon}(w)$  for some  $\varepsilon > 0$  (see Lemma 1) and satisfies the doubling condition: there exists a constant  $C_0$  such that

$$\frac{1}{w(B(x, 2r))} \int_{B(x, 2r)} U(y)w(y) dy \leq C_0 \frac{1}{w(B(x, r))} \int_{B(x, r)} U(y)w(y) dy$$

for every  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and  $r > 0$ . We also note that almost all properties of  $(RH)_q(w)$  hold for  $(RH)_{q, \text{loc}}(w)$  (see [Sh2]).

DEFINITION 3. (1) We say  $w \in D_\gamma$  if there exists a constant  $C > 0$  such that  $w(B(x, tr)) \leq Ct^\gamma w(B(x, r))$  for every  $t > 1$ .

(2) We say  $w \in (RD)_\nu$  if there exists a constant  $C > 0$  such that  $w(B(x, tr)) \geq Ct^\nu w(B(x, r))$  for every  $t > 1$ .

We now state the main results of this paper. Let  $\Gamma_w(x, y; V)$  be the fundamental solution to the operator  $L = -\nabla(A(x)\nabla) + V(x)$  with  $A(x)$  satisfying (1) and  $V(x) \geq 0$ .

THEOREM 1. Assume  $w \in A_2 \cap (RD)_\nu \cap D_\gamma$  with  $2 < \nu \leq \gamma$  and  $V/w \in (RH)_q(w)$  for some  $q > \gamma/2$ . Then for each  $k > 0$  there exists a constant  $C_k$  such that

$$(0 \leq) \Gamma_w(x, y; V) \leq \frac{C_k}{(1 + m_w(x, V/w)|x - y|)^k} \cdot \frac{|x - y|^2}{w(B(x, |x - y|))}.$$

THEOREM 2. Let  $S = m_w(\cdot, V/w)^2 L^{-1}$ . Under the same assumptions as in Theorem 1, there exists a constant  $C > 0$  such that

$$|Sf(x)| \leq CM_w(f/w)(x),$$

where  $M_w$  is the Hardy-Littlewood maximal function with respect to the measure  $w(x)dx$ , i.e.,  $(M_w f)(x) = \sup_{x \in B} w(B)^{-1} \int_B |f(x)|w(x) dx$ . Hence we also have

$$\|Sf\|_{L^p(wdx)} \leq C \|f/w\|_{L^p(wdx)}$$

for every  $1 < p < \infty$ .

Theorem 2 is an extension of a result of J. Zhong [Zh, Lemma 3.2] in which only the non-degenerate case  $A(x) \equiv I$  and non-negative polynomials  $V$  were considered.

**THEOREM 3.** *Under the same assumptions as in Theorem 1, there exists a constant  $C > 0$  such that*

$$|T^*f(x)| \leq C\{M_w(|f|^{q'})(x)\}^{1/q'},$$

where  $1/q' + 1/q = 1$  and  $T^*$  is the conjugate operator to  $T = VL^{-1}$ .

**REMARK 1.** It is known that  $w \in A_2$  implies  $w \in D_{2n}$ . Hence Theorems 1 and 2 hold for  $w \in A_2 \cap (RD)_\nu$  with  $2 < \nu$  and  $V/w \in (RH)_q(w)$  for some  $q > n$ .

**COROLLARY 1.** (a) *Let  $V/w \in (RH)_\infty(w)$  and  $T = VL^{-1}$ . Then, under the same assumptions as in Theorem 1, we have*

$$\|Tf\|_{L^p(\sigma dx)} \leq C\|f\|_{L^p(\sigma dx)}$$

for every  $1 < p < \infty$ , where  $\sigma(x) = w(x)^{1-p}$ .

(b) *Suppose  $V/w \in (RH)_q(w)$  with  $q > \gamma/2$ . Then*

$$\|Tf\|_{L^p(\sigma dx)} \leq C\|f\|_{L^p(\sigma dx)}$$

for every  $1 < p < q$ , where  $\sigma(x) = w(x)^{1-p}$ .

Next, we consider the operator

$$H = -\frac{1}{w} \operatorname{div}(A(x)\nabla) + U(x)$$

on  $L^2(wdx)$ , where  $U \geq 0$ ,  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  for some  $q > \gamma/2$ . Here we assume that  $A(x)$  satisfies (1) with a weight  $w \in A_2 \cap D_\gamma$  with  $\gamma > 2$ . Then the operator  $H$  can be realized as a self-adjoint operator on  $L^2(wdx)$  by the Friedrichs extension (see e.g. [Da, Theorem 1.2.8]). For  $\lambda > 0$ , we denote by  $N(\lambda, H)$  the number of eigenvalues to  $H$  less than or equal to  $\lambda$ . Then we have the following estimate for  $N(\lambda, H)$ .

**THEOREM 4.** *Assume  $w \in A_2 \cap D_\gamma \cap (RD)_\nu$  with  $\gamma \geq \nu > 2$  and  $U \geq 0$ ,  $U + 1 \in (RH)_{q, \text{loc}}(w)$  with  $q > \gamma/2$ . Assume also that there exist constants  $d_j$ ,  $j = 1, 2$ , such that*

$$(3) \quad 0 < d_1 \leq w(B(x, 1)) \leq d_2 < \infty$$

for every  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . Then there exist positive constants  $C_j$ ,  $j = 1, 2, 3, 4$ , such that for  $\lambda \geq 1$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} C_1\lambda^{\nu/2}w(\{x : m_w(x, U + 1) \leq C_2\sqrt{\lambda}\}) \\ \leq N(\lambda, H) \leq C_3\lambda^{\gamma/2}w(\{x : m_w(x, U + 1) \leq C_4\sqrt{\lambda}\}). \end{aligned}$$

Theorem 4 easily implies the following.

**COROLLARY 2.** *Under the same assumptions as in Theorem 4, there exist positive constants  $C_j$ ,  $j = 1, 2, 3, 4$ , such that for  $\lambda \geq 1$ ,*

$$\begin{aligned} (w(x)dx \times dp)(\{|p|^{2n/\nu} + C_1m_w(x, U + 1)^2 < \lambda\}) &\leq C_2N(\lambda, H), \\ C_3N(\lambda, H) &\leq (w(x)dx \times dp)(\{|p|^{2n/\gamma} + C_4m_w(x, U + 1)^2 < \lambda\}). \end{aligned}$$

This generalizes Theorem 0.9 of [Sh2] which deals with the non-degenerate case  $A(x) = I$ . Next, we show the exponential decay of eigenfunctions  $u \in L^2(wdx)$  with eigenvalue  $\lambda \geq 1$  of  $H$ , that is,  $Hu = \lambda u$  in  $L^2(wdx)$ . To state the result, we define the Agmon type distance  $d(x, y)$  associated with the potential  $U$  and a weight  $w$ :

$$d(x, y) = \inf \left\{ \int_0^1 m_w(\gamma(t), U + 1) |\gamma'(t)| dt : \gamma(0) = x, \gamma(1) = y \right\}.$$

Let  $E_\lambda = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^n : m_w(x, U + 1) < \sqrt{\lambda}\}$  and define  $d_\lambda(x) = \inf\{d(x, y) : y \in E_\lambda\}$ .

**THEOREM 5.** *Under the same assumption as in Theorem 4, let  $u \in L^2(wdx)$  satisfy  $Hu = \lambda u$  in  $L^2(wdx)$  for some  $\lambda \geq 1$ . Then for sufficiently small  $\varepsilon > 0$  there exist constants  $C, C_\varepsilon$  such that*

$$|u(x)| \leq C_\varepsilon \lambda^{\gamma/4} e^{-\varepsilon d_\lambda(x)} \|u\|_{L^2(wdx)} \quad (x \in \mathbb{R}^n).$$

**COROLLARY 3.** *Let  $u \in L^2(wdx)$  be an eigenfunction of  $H$  with eigenvalue  $\lambda \geq 1$ . If  $m_w(x, U + 1) \rightarrow \infty$ , then there exist constants  $C_\lambda, C'_\lambda$  such that*

$$|u(x)| \leq C_\lambda e^{-\varepsilon d(x, 0)} \|u\|_{L^2(wdx)} \quad \text{and} \quad |u(x)| \leq C'_\lambda e^{-\varepsilon |x|} \|u\|_{L^2(wdx)}.$$

We use the following notation throughout this paper:  $B(x, r) = B_r(x) = \{y \in \mathbb{R}^n : |x - y| < r\}$  for  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and  $r > 0$ ;  $f \sim g$  means that there exist positive constants  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  such that  $C_1 f \leq g \leq C_2 f$ ;  $\nabla = (\nabla_1, \dots, \nabla_n)$ ,  $\nabla_j = \partial/\partial x_j$ .

**2. Preliminaries.** We collect some properties of the class  $(RH)_q(w)$ .

**LEMMA 1.** (i) *If  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$ , then  $U \in A_\infty(w)$ .*

(ii) *If  $U_1, U_2 \in (RH)_q(w)$ , then  $U = \alpha U_1 + \beta U_2 \in (RH)_q(w)$  for every  $\alpha, \beta > 0$ .*

(iii) *If  $U_1, U_2 \in (RH)_{2q}(w)$ , then  $U = U_1 U_2 \in (RH)_q(w)$ .*

(iv) *If  $U \in (RH)_\infty(w)$ , then  $W = U^\alpha \in (RH)_\infty(w)$  for every  $\alpha > 0$ .*

(v) *If  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$ , then  $U \in (RH)_{q+\varepsilon}(w)$  for some  $\varepsilon > 0$ .*

**PROOF.** For (i) see [CoF]. (ii) is easy. To show (iii), first by using Hölder's inequality and the assumption  $U_j \in (RH)_{2q}(w)$ ,  $j = 1, 2$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B (U_1 U_2)^q w \, dx \right)^{1/q} \\ & \leq \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U_1^{2q} w \, dx \right)^{1/(2q)} \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U_2^{2q} w \, dx \right)^{1/(2q)} \\ & \leq C \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U_1 w \, dx \right) \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U_2 w \, dx \right) \end{aligned}$$

for any ball  $B$ . It is known ([CoF]) that  $U \in A_\infty(w)$  if and only if

$$\frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U w \, dx \leq C \exp \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B (\log U) w \, dx \right).$$

Hence by Jensen's inequality we obtain  $U_1 U_2 \in (RH)_q(w)$ . To show (iv), it suffices to consider the case  $\alpha \in (0, 1)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \sup_B W &= (\sup_B U)^\alpha \leq \left( C \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U w \, dx \right)^\alpha \\ &\leq (\sup_B W^{1-\alpha}) \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U^\alpha w \, dx \right)^\alpha. \end{aligned}$$

Hence we obtain (iv).

The property (v) is well known ([Ge]), but we give its proof based on the weight theory for the sake of completeness (cf. [SW]). It suffices to show that  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  implies  $U^q \in A_\infty(w)$ , because the weight theory says that for every  $W \in A_\infty(w)$  there exists a constant  $\delta > 0$  such that  $W \in (RH)_{1+\delta}(w)$ . Hence we obtain  $U \in (RH)_{q(1+\delta)}(w)$ . To show  $U^q \in A_\infty(w)$  we use the characterization of  $A_\infty(w)$  that appeared in the proof of (iii). Note the following identity:

$$\begin{aligned} & \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U^q w \, dx \right)^{1/q} \left( \exp \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B \left( \log \frac{1}{U^q} \right) w \, dx \right) \right)^{1/q} \\ &= \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U w \, dx \right)^{-1} \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U^q w \, dx \right)^{1/q} \\ & \quad \times \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U w \, dx \right) \left( \exp \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B \left( \log \frac{1}{U} \right) w \, dx \right) \right). \end{aligned}$$

It follows that  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  implies

$$\left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B U^q w \, dx \right)^{1/q} \left( \exp \left( \frac{1}{w(B)} \int_B \left( \log \frac{1}{U^q} \right) w \, dx \right) \right)^{1/q} \leq C,$$

and hence  $U^q \in A_\infty(w)$ . ■

The following lemma makes the quantity  $m_w(x, U)$  well defined and  $0 < m_w(x, U) < \infty$  for  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  with  $q > \gamma/2$ .

LEMMA 2. Assume  $w \in D_\gamma$  with  $\gamma > 0$  and  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  with  $q > \gamma/2$ . Then

$$\frac{r^2}{w(B_r(x))} \int_{B_r(x)} U(y)w(y) \, dy \leq C_0 \left( \frac{r}{R} \right)^\alpha \frac{R^2}{w(B_R(x))} \int_{B_R(x)} U(y)w(y) \, dy$$

for some positive constant  $C_0$  and for every  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and  $0 < r < R < \infty$ , where  $\alpha = 2 - \gamma/q > 0$ .

Proof. We write  $B_r = B_r(x)$  for simplicity. By using Hölder's inequality and (2), we have

$$\frac{r^2}{w(B_r)} \int_{B_r} U(y)w(y) \, dy \leq C \left( \frac{r}{R} \right)^2 \left( \frac{w(B_R)}{w(B_r)} \right)^{1/q} \frac{R^2}{w(B_R)} \int_{B_R} U(y)w(y) \, dy$$

for every  $0 < r < R < \infty$ . Since  $w \in D_\gamma$ , it follows that  $w(B_R)/w(B_r) \leq C(R/r)^\gamma$ . Hence we arrive at the conclusion. ■

LEMMA 3. Under the same assumptions as in Lemma 2, if

$$r^2 w(B_r(x))^{-1} \int_{B_r(x)} U(y)w(y) \, dy \sim 1,$$

then  $r \sim m_w(x, U)^{-1}$ .

Proof. We use the notation

$$\Phi(x, r) = \frac{r^2}{w(B_r(x))} \int_{B_r(x)} U(y)w(y) \, dy.$$

By assumption there exist positive constants  $C_1, C_2$  such that

$$C_1 \leq \frac{r^2}{w(B_r(x))} \int_{B_r(x)} U(y)w(y) \, dy \leq C_2.$$

We may assume  $0 < C_1 < 1 < C_2$  and that the constant  $C_0$  in Lemma 2 satisfies  $C_0 > 1$ . Then Lemma 2 and the definition of  $m_w(x, U)$  imply

$$(C_0 C_2)^{-1/\alpha} r \leq \frac{1}{m_w(x, U)} \leq (C_0/C_1)^{1/\alpha} r.$$

Indeed, let  $R = (C_0 C_2)^{-1/\alpha} r$ . Then  $R < r$  and it follows from Lemma 2 that

$$\Phi(x, R) \leq C_0 (R/r)^\alpha \Phi(x, r) = \frac{1}{C_2} \Phi(x, r) \leq 1.$$

Hence  $m_w(x, U)^{-1} \geq (C_0 C_2)^{-1/\alpha} r$ . On the other hand, for every  $R \geq (C_0/C_1)^{1/\alpha} r$ , we have  $R > r$  and  $C_1 \leq \Phi(x, r) \leq C_0 (r/R)^\alpha \Phi(x, R) \leq C_1 \Phi(x, R)$  by Lemma 2. Hence  $m_w(x, U)^{-1} \leq (C_0/C_1)^{1/\alpha} r$ . ■

LEMMA 4. Under the same assumptions as in Lemma 2, we have the following properties.

(i) For any constant  $C > 0$ , we have  $m_w(x, U) \sim m_w(y, U)$  if  $|x - y| \leq C/m_w(x, U)$ .

(ii) There exist positive constants  $C_1, C_2, k_0$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} m_w(y, U) &\leq C_1(1 + m_w(x, U)|x - y|^{k_0})m_w(x, U), \\ m_w(y, U) &\geq C_2 \frac{m_w(x, U)}{(1 + m_w(x, U)|x - y|^{k_0/(k_0+1)})}. \end{aligned}$$

PROOF. Recall that  $U(x)w(x)dx$  is a doubling measure for  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  with  $q > 1$ . Since the proof is similar to that in [Sh1, Lemma 1.4] by using Lemmas 2 and 3, we omit the details. ■

**3. A weighted Fefferman–Phong inequality.** In this section we show a weighted version of Fefferman–Phong’s inequality. We also recall some estimates for the fundamental solution of  $L_0 = -\nabla(A(x)\nabla)$ . First we note the following Poincaré type inequality.

LEMMA 5. Let  $w \in A_2$ . Then there exists a constant  $C > 0$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{B_r(x_0)} \int_{B_r(x_0)} |u(x) - u(y)|^2 w(x)w(y) dx dy \\ \leq Cr^2 w(B_r(x_0)) \int_{B_r(x_0)} |\nabla u(x)|^2 w(x) dx \end{aligned}$$

for  $u \in C^1(\overline{B_r(x_0)})$ .

PROOF. For simplicity, we write  $B_r = B_r(x_0)$  in the proof. The assertion is an easy consequence of the following well known Poincaré inequality: under the assumption  $w \in A_2$ , we have

$$(4) \quad \int_{B_r} |u(x) - (u)_{B_r}|^2 w(x) dx \leq Cr^2 \int_{B_r} w(x) |\nabla u(x)|^2 dx,$$

where  $(u)_{B_r} = w(B_r)^{-1} \int_{B_r} u(x)w(x) dx$ . For the proof of (4) see [FKS]. Actually, for every  $y \in B_r$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{B_r} |u(x) - u(y)|^2 w(x) dx \\ \leq 2 \int_{B_r} (|u(x) - (u)_{B_r}|^2 + |u(y) - (u)_{B_r}|^2) w(x) dx \\ \leq Cr^2 \int_{B_r} w(x) |\nabla u(x)|^2 dx + 2w(B_r) |u(y) - (u)_{B_r}|^2. \end{aligned}$$

Hence by multiplying with  $w(y)$ , integrating on  $y \in B_r$  and using the inequality (4) again, we arrive at the desired estimate. ■

Next we show a weighted version of Fefferman–Phong’s inequality. See [Sh1] for its original version (see also [Fe] and [Sm]).

LEMMA 6. Assume  $w \in A_2 \cap D_\gamma$  with  $\gamma > 0$  and  $U \in (RH)_q(w)$  with  $q > \gamma/2$ . Then

$$(5) \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} |u(x)|^2 m_w(x, U)^2 w(x) dx \leq C \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} (|\nabla u(x)|^2 w(x) + |u(x)|^2 U(x)w(x)) dx.$$

PROOF. Let  $x_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and  $r_0 = m_w(x_0, U)^{-1}$ . Since  $U$  is an  $A_\infty(w)$ -weight, there exists a constant  $\varepsilon > 0$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} w \left( \left\{ x \in B_{r_0}(x_0) : U(x) \geq \frac{\varepsilon}{w(B_{r_0}(x_0))} \int_{B_{r_0}(x_0)} U(y)w(y) dy \right\} \right) \\ \geq \frac{1}{2} w(B_{r_0}(x_0)). \end{aligned}$$

Put

$$\bar{U} \equiv w(B_{r_0}(x_0))^{-1} \int_{B_{r_0}(x_0)} U(y)w(y) dy$$

and  $A = \{y \in B_{r_0}(x_0) : U(y) \geq \varepsilon \bar{U}\}$ . Then, by the definition of  $r_0$ , we have  $\bar{U} = r_0^{-2}$  and  $w(A) \geq \frac{1}{2} w(B_{r_0})$  with  $B_{r_0} = B_{r_0}(x_0)$ . Hence we obtain

$$(6) \quad \begin{aligned} \int_{B_{r_0}} \int_{B_{r_0}} \min(\varepsilon/r_0^2, U(y)) |u(x)|^2 w(x)w(y) dx dy \\ \geq \int_{B_{r_0}} |u(x)|^2 w(x) \left( \int_A (\varepsilon/r_0^2) w(y) dy \right) dx \\ \geq \frac{\varepsilon}{2r_0^2} w(B_{r_0}) \int_{B_{r_0}} |u(x)|^2 w(x) dx. \end{aligned}$$

On the other hand, we will show

$$(7) \quad \begin{aligned} \int_{B_{r_0}} \int_{B_{r_0}} \min(\varepsilon/r_0^2, U(y)) |u(x)|^2 w(x)w(y) dx dy \\ \leq Cw(B_{r_0}) \left( \int_{B_{r_0}} w(x) |\nabla u(x)|^2 dx + \int_{B_{r_0}} |u(x)|^2 U(x)w(x) dx \right). \end{aligned}$$

Indeed, since  $|u(x)|^2 \leq 2(|u(x) - u(y)|^2 + |u(y)|^2)$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{B_{r_0}} \int_{B_{r_0}} \min(\varepsilon/r_0^2, U(y)) |u(x)|^2 w(x) w(y) dx dy \\ & \leq 2 \int_{B_{r_0}} \int_{B_{r_0}} \frac{\varepsilon}{r_0^2} |u(x) - u(y)|^2 w(x) w(y) dx dy \\ & \quad + 2w(B_{r_0}) \int_{B_{r_0}} |u(y)|^2 U(y) w(y) dy. \end{aligned}$$

By Lemma 5, we arrive at the inequality (7). Therefore, by (6) and (7) we obtain

$$\int_{B_{r_0}} (|\nabla u|^2 + |u|^2 U(x)) w(x) dx \geq \frac{C}{r_0^2} \int_{B_{r_0}} |u|^2 w dx.$$

By Lemma 4(i), we have  $m_w(x, U) \sim 1/r_0$  for  $x \in B_{r_0}$ . Hence

$$\int_{B_{r_0}} m_w(x, U)^n (|\nabla u|^2 + |u|^2 U) w dx \geq C \int_{B_{r_0}} |u(x)|^2 m_w(x, U)^{n+2} w(x) dx.$$

Integrating this over  $x_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and changing the order of integration, we obtain the desired estimate (5). Here we use

$$\int_{|x-x_0| < 1/m_w(x_0, U)} dx_0 \sim \int_{|x-x_0| < 1/m_w(x, U)} dx_0 \sim m_w(x, U)^{-n}. \quad \blacksquare$$

LEMMA 7. Assume  $w \in A_2 \cap (RD)_\nu$  with  $\nu > 2$ . Let  $\Gamma^0(x, y)$  be the fundamental solution of  $L_0$ . Then

$$(0 \leq) \Gamma^0(x, y) \leq C \frac{|x-y|^2}{w(B(x, |x-y|))}.$$

Proof. By the estimate in [FJK], we know

$$(0 \leq) \Gamma^0(x, y) \leq C \int_{|x-y|}^{\infty} \frac{s^2}{w(B(x, s))} \frac{ds}{s}.$$

The assumption  $w \in (RD)_\nu$  with  $\nu > 2$  implies that

$$(8) \quad \int_r^{\infty} \frac{s^2}{w(B(x, s))} \frac{ds}{s} \leq C \frac{r^2}{w(B(x, r))}.$$

In fact, since  $w \in (RD)_\nu$  with  $\nu > 2$ , we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \int_r^{\infty} \frac{s^2}{w(B(x, s))} \frac{ds}{s} &= \int_1^{\infty} \frac{r^2 s^2}{w(B(x, rs))} \frac{ds}{s} \\ &\leq C \int_1^{\infty} \frac{r^2 s^{2-\nu}}{w(B(x, r))} \frac{ds}{s} = C \frac{r^2}{w(B(x, r))}. \quad \blacksquare \end{aligned}$$

The observation (8) can also be found in [CSW, p. 316].

**4. An estimate of fundamental solutions.** First we note the following subsolution estimate.

LEMMA 8. Assume  $w \in A_2$ . Let  $v$  be a non-negative subsolution of  $L_0$  on  $B_{2R} = B_{2R}(y)$ . Then for all  $\sigma \in (0, 1)$  there exists a constant  $C_\sigma$  such that

$$\sup_{x \in B_{\sigma R}(y)} v(x) \leq \frac{C_\sigma}{w(B_R(y))} \int_{B_R(y)} v(x) w(x) dx.$$

Proof. We write  $B_r = B_r(y)$  for simplicity. The result in [FKS] yields the following estimate:

$$\sup_{x \in B_{\sigma R}} v(x) \leq C_\sigma \left( \frac{1}{w(B_R)} \int_{B_R} v(x)^2 w(x) dx \right)^{1/2}.$$

We conclude by using the reverse Hölder type estimate:

$$\left( \frac{1}{w(B_R)} \int_{B_R} v(x)^2 w(x) dx \right)^{1/2} \leq C \frac{1}{w(B_{2R})} \int_{B_{2R}} v(x) w(x) dx.$$

This inequality can be shown by using the argument as in [Gu] (see also [CFG], [Ku1, 2]).  $\blacksquare$

LEMMA 9. Assume  $w \in A_2 \cap D_\gamma$  with  $\gamma > 0$  and  $V/w \in (RH)_q(w)$  with  $q > \gamma/2$ . Let  $u$  be a solution of  $Lu = 0$  on  $B_{4R}(x_0)$ . Then for every  $k > 0$  there exists a constant  $C_k$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} & \sup_{x \in B_R(x_0)} |u(x)| \\ & \leq \frac{C_k}{(1 + Rm_w(x_0, V/w))^k} \left( \frac{1}{w(B_{2R}(x_0))} \int_{B_{2R}(x_0)} |u(x)|^2 w(x) dx \right)^{1/2}. \end{aligned}$$

Proof. We write  $B_R = B_R(x_0)$  for simplicity. Since

$$\frac{1}{2} \nabla(A(x) \nabla |u|^2) = V|u|^2 + \sum_{i,j=1}^n a_{ij}(x) \nabla_i u \nabla_j u \geq 0,$$

$v = |u|^2$  is a subsolution to  $L_0 v = 0$ . Hence Lemma 8 shows that

$$(9) \quad \sup_{B_R} |u| \leq C \left( \frac{1}{w(B_{3R/2})} \int_{B_{3R/2}} |u|^2 w dx \right)^{1/2}.$$

By Caccioppoli's inequality, we have

$$(10) \quad \int_{B_{3R/2}} w |\nabla u|^2 dx + \int_{B_{3R/2}} V |u|^2 dx \leq \frac{C}{R^2} \int_{B_{2R}} w |u|^2 dx.$$

Hence (10) and Lemma 6 yield

$$\int_{B_R} m_w(x, V/w)^2 |u(x)|^2 w(x) dx \leq \frac{C}{R^2} \int_{B_{2R}} w |u|^2 dx.$$

By Lemma 4(ii),

$$m_w(x, V/w) \geq C m_w(x_0, V/w) / (1 + R m_w(x_0, V/w))^{k_0/(k_0+1)}$$

for every  $x \in B_R$ . Thus

$$\int_{B_R} |u(x)|^2 w(x) dx \leq \frac{C}{(1 + R m_w(x_0, V/w))^{2/(k_0+1)}} \int_{B_{2R}} |u|^2 w dx.$$

By repeating this argument and using (9) and  $w \in D_\gamma$ , we arrive at the desired estimate. ■

*Proof of Theorem 1.* By the maximum principle (see e.g. [CW]), we have

$$0 \leq \Gamma_w(x, y; V) \leq \Gamma^0(x, y).$$

Let  $x_0 \neq y \in \mathbb{R}^n$  and put  $R = |x_0 - y|$ . Since  $u(x) = \Gamma_w(x, y; V)$  satisfies  $Lu = 0$  on  $B_{R/2}(x_0)$ , Lemma 9 shows that

$$\begin{aligned} & \sup_{x \in B_{R/4}(x_0)} |u(x)| \\ & \leq \frac{C_k}{(1 + R m_w(x_0, V/w))^k} \left( \frac{1}{w(B_{R/2}(x_0))} \int_{B_{R/2}(x_0)} |u(x)|^2 w(x) dx \right)^{1/2}. \end{aligned}$$

Note that  $\Gamma^0(x, y) \leq C \Gamma^0(x_0, y)$  for  $x \in B_{R/2}(x_0)$  by Harnack's inequality (see [FKS, Lemma 2.3.5]). Hence by Lemma 7, we have

$$\left( \frac{1}{w(B_{R/2}(x_0))} \int_{B_{R/2}(x_0)} |u(x)|^2 w(x) dx \right)^{1/2} \leq C \frac{R^2}{w(B(x_0, R))}.$$

Therefore we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \Gamma_w(x_0, y; V) = u(x_0) & \leq \sup_{x \in B_{R/4}(x_0)} |u(x)| \\ & \leq \frac{C_k}{(1 + R m_w(x_0, V/w))^k} \cdot \frac{R^2}{w(B(x_0, R))}. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $R = |x_0 - y|$ , we get the desired estimate. ■

Once we obtain Theorem 1, we can prove Theorems 2 and 3 in a similar way to [KS].

*Proof of Theorem 2.* Let  $f \in C_0^\infty$ . By Theorem 1, we have

$$(11) \quad |Sf(x)| \leq \int \frac{m_w(x, V/w)^2 C_k |x - y|^2}{(1 + m_w(x, V/w) |x - y|)^k w(B(x, |x - y|))} |f(y)| dy.$$

Put  $r = 1/m_w(x, V/w)$ . Then, by the doubling property of  $w(x)$ , the right hand side of (11) is dominated by

$$\sum_{j=-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{\{2^{j-1}r < |x-y| \leq 2^j r\}} \frac{C_k}{r^2} \cdot \frac{(2^j r)^2}{(1 + 2^{j-1})^k w(B(x, 2^j r))} |f(y)| dy \leq C M_w(f/w)(x),$$

if we take  $k \geq 3$ . ■

*Proof of Theorem 3.* Let  $r = 1/m_w(x, V/w)$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} |T^* f(x)| & \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \Gamma_w(y, x; V) V(y) |f(y)| dy \\ & \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \frac{C_k |x - y|^2}{(1 + m_w(x, V/w) |x - y|)^k w(B(x, |x - y|))} V(y) |f(y)| dy \\ & \leq C_k \sum_{j=-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{\{2^{j-1}r < |x-y| \leq 2^j r\}} \frac{(2^j r)^2}{(1 + 2^{j-1})^k w(B(x, 2^{j-1}r))} V(y) |f(y)| dy \\ & \leq C_k \sum_{j=-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{(2^j r)^2}{(1 + 2^{j-1})^k} \left[ \frac{1}{w(B(x, 2^{j-1}r))} \int_{B(x, 2^{j-1}r)} \left( \frac{V(y)}{w(y)} \right)^q w(y) dy \right]^{1/q} \\ & \quad \times \left[ \frac{1}{w(B(x, 2^{j-1}r))} \int_{B(x, 2^{j-1}r)} |f(y)|^{q'} w(y) dy \right]^{1/q'} \\ & \leq C_k [M_w(|f|^{q'})(x)]^{1/q'} \sum_{j=-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{(2^j r)^2}{(1 + 2^{j-1})^k} \\ & \quad \times \left[ \frac{1}{w(B(x, 2^{j-1}r))} \int_{B(x, 2^{j-1}r)} \left( \frac{V(y)}{w(y)} \right) w(y) dy \right]. \end{aligned}$$

Note that  $V dx$  is a doubling measure because  $V/w \in A_\infty(w)$ .

For the case  $j \geq 1$ , since  $w \in (RD)_\nu$ , we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{(2^j r)^2}{w(B(x, 2^{j-1}r))} \int_{B(x, 2^{j-1}r)} V(y) dy \\ & \leq 2^{2j} C_0^{j-1} C 2^{-(j-1)\nu} \frac{r^2}{w(B(x, r))} \int_{B(x, r)} V(y) dy = 4C (2^{k_0})^{j-1}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $k_0 = 2 - \nu + \log_2 C_0$ . For the case  $j \leq 0$ , by Lemma 2 we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{(2^j r)^2}{w(B(x, 2^{j-1}r))} \int_{B(x, 2^{j-1}r)} V(y) dy \\ & \leq C \left( \frac{r}{2^{j-1}r} \right)^{\gamma/q-2} \frac{r^2}{w(B(x, r))} \int_{B(x, r)} V(y) dy = C(2^{j-1})^{2-\gamma/q}. \end{aligned}$$

Hence if we take  $k \geq k_0 + 1$  we conclude that

$$|T^* f(x)| \leq C[M_w(|f|^{q'})(x)]^{1/q'}. \quad \blacksquare$$

*Proof of Corollary 1.* Since  $V(x)/w(x) \leq Cm_w(x, V/w)^2$  by the definition of  $m_w(x, V/w)$ , Theorem 2 yields

$$\left\| \frac{Tf}{w} \right\|_{L^p(wdx)} \leq C \left\| \frac{f}{w} \right\|_{L^p(wdx)}.$$

Part (a) follows from this. Let  $1/p + 1/p' = 1$ . For  $q' < p'$  it is known that  $M_w$  is bounded on  $L^{p'/q'}(wdx)$ . Hence  $T^*$  is bounded on  $L^{p'}(wdx)$  for  $1 < p < q$ . By duality we obtain the boundedness of  $T$  on  $L^p(w^{1-p} dx)$ . This gives (b).  $\blacksquare$

**5. Eigenvalue asymptotics and decay of eigenfunctions.** In this section we show Theorems 4 and 5. We denote by  $Q(x, r)$  the cube with sidelength  $r$  and center  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$ .

*Proof of Theorem 4.* We follow the argument of [Sh2].

**STEP 1.** First, we show the lower bound. Let  $E_\lambda = \{x : m_w(x, U+1) \leq \sqrt{\lambda}\}$  for  $\lambda \geq 1$  and divide  $\mathbb{R}^n$  into disjoint cubes  $\{Q_l\}$  with sidelength  $1/\sqrt{\lambda}$  whose sides are parallel to the coordinate axes. Let  $m$  be the number of cubes  $Q_l$  such that  $Q_l \cap E_\lambda \neq \emptyset$  and let  $Q_k = Q_{l_k} = Q(x_k, 1/\sqrt{\lambda})$  be such that  $Q_{l_k} \cap E_\lambda \neq \emptyset$ . Then

$$w(E_\lambda) = \sum_l w(Q_l \cap E_\lambda) \leq \sum_{k=1}^m w(Q_k) \leq Cd_2 m \lambda^{-\nu/2}.$$

Here we have used

$$w(Q(x, 1/\sqrt{\lambda})) \leq C(1/\sqrt{\lambda})^\nu w(Q(x, 1))$$

since  $w \in (RD)_\nu$  and  $\sup_x w(Q(x, 1)) \leq d_2$  by assumption. Next we show that there exists an  $m$ -dimensional subspace  $\mathcal{H}$  of  $L^2(wdx)$  such that

$$(12) \quad \sum_{i,j=1}^n \int a_{ij}(x) \nabla_i u \nabla_j u dx + \int U u^2 w dx \leq C\lambda \int u^2 w dx \quad (u \in \mathcal{H}).$$

Now (12) and the min-max principle imply that

$$N(C\lambda, H) \geq m \geq C \frac{1}{d_2} \lambda^{\nu/2} w(E_\lambda).$$

Choose a function  $\eta \in C_0^\infty(Q(0, 1))$  such that  $\eta(x) = 1$  on  $x \in Q(0, 1/2)$  and put  $\eta_{l,\lambda}(x) = \lambda^{\nu/4} \eta(\sqrt{\lambda}(x - x_l))$ ,  $l = 1, \dots, m$ . Let  $\mathcal{H}$  be the subspace spanned by  $\{\eta_{k,\lambda}\}_{k=1}^m$ . Since  $Q_k$  are disjoint,  $\mathcal{H}$  is an  $m$ -dimensional subspace of  $L^2(wdx)$ . Let  $L = \sup(|\nabla \eta(x)| + |\eta(x)|)$  and  $r_k = 1/m_w(x_k, U+1)$ . Then

$$\sum_{i,j=1}^n \int a_{ij} \nabla_i \eta_{k,\lambda} \nabla_j \eta_{k,\lambda} dx \leq \mu^{-1} L^2 \lambda [\lambda^{\nu/2} w(Q(x_k, 1/\sqrt{\lambda}))],$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \int U \eta_{k,\lambda}^2 w dx & \leq L^2 \lambda^{\nu/2} \int_{Q_k} U w dx \\ & \leq L^2 \lambda [\lambda^{\nu/2} w(Q(x_k, 1/\sqrt{\lambda}))] \frac{(1/\sqrt{\lambda})^2}{w(Q(x_k, 1/\sqrt{\lambda}))} \int_{Q(x_k, 1/\sqrt{\lambda})} U w dx \\ & \leq L^2 \lambda [\lambda^{\nu/2} w(Q(x_k, 1/\sqrt{\lambda}))] (\sqrt{\lambda} r_k)^{\gamma/q-2} \frac{r_k^2}{w(Q(x_k, r_k))} \int_{Q(x_k, r_k)} U w dx \\ & \leq L^2 \lambda (\lambda^{\nu/2} w(Q(x_k, 1/\sqrt{\lambda}))). \end{aligned}$$

Here we have used Lemma 3 and  $1/\sqrt{\lambda} \leq Cr_k$  because  $Q_k \cap E_\lambda \neq \emptyset$ . Hence it follows from the doubling property of  $w$  that

$$(13) \quad \sum_{i,j=1}^n \int a_{ij} \nabla_i \eta_{k,\lambda} \nabla_j \eta_{k,\lambda} dx + \int U \eta_{k,\lambda}^2 w dx \leq CL^2 \lambda \left[ \lambda^{\nu/2} w \left( Q \left( x_k, \frac{1}{2\sqrt{\lambda}} \right) \right) \right].$$

On the other hand, it is easy to see that

$$(14) \quad \int \eta_{k,\lambda}^2 w dx \geq \lambda^{\nu/2} w \left( Q \left( x_k, \frac{1}{2\sqrt{\lambda}} \right) \right).$$

Thus by (13) and (14) we obtain the desired estimate.

**STEP 2.** Next, we show the upper bound. It suffices to show the existence of a subspace  $\mathcal{H}$  satisfying the following conditions: there exist positive constants  $C_j$ ,  $j = 1, 2, 3$ , such that

$$\dim \mathcal{H} \leq C_1 \lambda^{\gamma/2} w(E_\lambda),$$

$$\int (|\nabla u|^2 + U u^2) w dx \geq C_2 \lambda \int u^2 w dx, \quad u \in \mathcal{H}^\perp, \lambda \geq C_3.$$

We need the following lemma which follows from Lemma 4.

**LEMMA 10** ([Hö, Theorem 1.4.10]). *Let  $U \in (RH)_{q,\text{loc}}(w)$  with  $q > \gamma/2$ . Then there exist a sequence  $\{x_i\} \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  and non-negative functions  $\phi_i \in C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^n)$  satisfying the following conditions:*

- (a)  $\mathbb{R}^n = \bigcup_{l=1}^{\infty} B_l$ ,  $B_l = B(x_l, m_w(x_l, U+1)^{-1})$ ;  
 (b)  $\phi_l \in C_0^\infty(B_l)$ ,  $\sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \phi_l(x) \equiv 1$  ( $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$ );  
 (c)  $|\partial_x^\beta \phi_l(x)| \leq C m_w(x, U+1)^{|\beta|}$  for every  $|\beta| \leq 2$ ;  
 (d)  $\sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \chi_{B_l}(x) \leq C$ .

Here the constant  $C$  does not depend on  $l$ .

First, for each  $l$  we have

$$\int |\nabla(u\phi_l)|^2 w dx \leq 2 \int |\nabla u|^2 \phi_l^2 w dx + C \int_{B_l} (m_w(x, U+1))^2 u^2 w dx.$$

It follows from Lemma 10(d) that

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \int (|\nabla(u\phi_l)|^2 w + (U+1)(u\phi_l)^2 w) dx \\ & \leq CC \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \int (|\nabla u|^2 \phi_l^2 w + m_w(x, U+1)^2 u^2 w + (U+1)u^2 \phi_l^2 w) dx \\ & \leq C \int |\nabla u|^2 w dx + C \int m_w(x, U+1)^2 u^2 w dx + C \int (U+1)u^2 w dx. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, Lemma 6 implies

$$(15) \quad \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \int (|\nabla(u\phi_l)|^2 w + (U+1)(u\phi_l)^2 w) dx \leq C \int (|\nabla u|^2 + (U+1)u^2) w dx.$$

Now, we consider two cases. If  $B_l \cap E_\lambda^c \neq \emptyset$ , then by the definition of  $E_\lambda$  we have  $\sup_{x \in B_l} m_w(x, U+1) \geq \lambda^{1/2}$ . Hence, Lemma 4(i) implies  $\inf_{x \in B_l} m_w(x, U+1) \geq C\lambda^{1/2}$ . Using this and Lemma 6 we obtain

$$(16) \quad \int_{B_l} (|\nabla(u\phi_l)|^2 + (U+1)(u\phi_l)^2) w dx \geq C \int_{B_l} m_w(x, U+1)^2 (u\phi_l)^2 w dx \geq C' \lambda \int_{B_l} (u\phi_l)^2 w dx.$$

Next, suppose  $B_l = B(x_l, r_l) \subset E_\lambda$ , where  $r_l = m_w(x_l, U+1)^{-1}$ . Let  $Q_l = Q(x_l, 2r_l)$  denote the cube with sidelength  $2r_l$  and center  $x_l$ . Then  $B_l \subset Q_l$ . Divide  $Q_l$  into disjoint subcubes  $\{Q_l^\beta\}$  with sidelength comparable to  $\lambda^{-1/2}$ . Note that  $r_l \geq \lambda^{-1/2}$ , since  $x_l \in E_\lambda$ . Let  $\mathcal{H}$  be the subspace generated by  $\{\phi_l(x) \chi_{Q_l^\beta}(x) : B_l \subset E_\lambda\}$ . If  $\int_{Q_l^\beta} u \phi_l w dx = 0$  for each  $Q_l^\beta$ , that is,  $u \in \mathcal{H}^\perp$ , then (4) yields

$$(17) \quad \begin{aligned} \lambda \int (u\phi_l)^2 w dx &= \lambda \sum_{\beta} \int_{Q_l^\beta} (u\phi_l)^2 w dx \\ &\leq C\lambda \sum_{\beta} (1/\sqrt{\lambda})^2 \int_{Q_l^\beta} |\nabla(u\phi_l)|^2 w dx \\ &\leq C \int_{Q_l} |\nabla(u\phi_l)|^2 w dx + \int_{Q_l} (U+1)(u\phi_l)^2 w dx. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, (16) and (17) imply

$$(18) \quad \int_{Q_l} |\nabla(u\phi_l)|^2 w dx + \int_{Q_l} (U+1)(u\phi_l)^2 w dx \geq C\lambda \int_{Q_l} (u\phi_l)^2 w dx$$

for every  $u \in \mathcal{H}^\perp$ . From (15) and (18), there exists a constant  $C_0 > 0$  such that for every  $\lambda \geq C_0$  we obtain

$$C\lambda \int u^2 w dx \leq C \int (|\nabla u|^2 + Uu^2) w dx$$

for  $u \in \mathcal{H}^\perp$ . Let  $m_l$  be the number of  $Q_l^\beta$  associated with  $B_l \subset E_\lambda$ . Then there exists a positive constant  $C$  such that  $m_l \leq C\lambda^{\gamma/2} w(B_l)$ . Indeed, assumptions (3) and  $w \in D_\gamma$  imply

$$w(B_l) \geq C(n)m_l w(Q_l^\beta) \geq C(n)m_l (1/\sqrt{\lambda})^\gamma w(Q(x_l, 1)) \geq Cm_l \lambda^{-\gamma/2}.$$

Hence by Lemma 10(d) we obtain

$$\dim \mathcal{H} \leq C \sum_{B_l \subset E_\lambda} \lambda^{\gamma/2} w(B_l) \leq C' \lambda^{\gamma/2} w(E_\lambda).$$

Thus we have proved the upper bound. ■

*Proof of Theorem 5.* Since we reason as in [Sh2], we just mention the key estimates of the proof. For an eigenfunction  $u \in L^2(w dx)$  with eigenvalue  $\lambda \geq 1$ , we obtain the subsolution estimate: there exists a constant  $C$  such that

$$|u(x)| \leq C \left( \frac{1}{w(B_r(x))} \int_{B_r(x)} |u(y)|^2 w(y) dy \right)^{1/2}$$

for  $\lambda r^2 \leq 1$ . Secondly, we obtain the estimate

$$\|e^{\varepsilon d_C \lambda} u\|_{L^2(w dx)} \leq C' \|u\|_{L^2(w dx)}$$

for small  $\varepsilon > 0$  and some constants  $C, C'$ . Now, by the assumption (7) and  $w \in D_\gamma$ , we have  $C r^\gamma \leq w(B(x, r))$  for some positive constant  $C$ . Combining these estimates, we conclude that

$$|u(x)| \leq C m_w(x, U+1)^{\gamma/2} e^{-\varepsilon d_C \lambda(x)} \|u\|_{L^2(w dx)}.$$

Once we obtain this estimate we can prove Theorem 5 in the same way as in Theorem 0.20 of [Sh2]. ■

Corollary 3 follows from Theorem 5 as in [Sh2].

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