# Multi-peak bound states for Schrödinger equations with compactly supported or unbounded potentials 

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Received 29 October 2009; received in revised form 28 April 2010; accepted 6 May 2010
Available online 25 May 2010


#### Abstract

In this paper, we will study the existence and qualitative property of standing waves $\psi(x, t)=e^{-\frac{i E t}{\varepsilon}} u(x)$ for the nonlinear Schrödinger equation $i \varepsilon \frac{\partial \psi}{\partial t}+\frac{\varepsilon^{2}}{2 m} \Delta_{x} \psi-(V(x)+E) \psi+K(x)|\psi|^{p-1} \psi=0,(t, x) \in \mathbb{R}_{+} \times \mathbb{R}^{N}$. Let $G(x)=[V(x)]^{\frac{p+1}{p-1}-\frac{N}{2}} \times$ $[K(x)]^{-\frac{2}{p-1}}$ and suppose that $G(x)$ has $k$ local minimum points. Then, for any $l \in\{1, \ldots, k\}$, we prove the existence of the standing waves in $H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ having exactly $l$ local maximum points which concentrate near $l$ local minimum points of $G(x)$ respectively as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$. The potentials $V(x)$ and $K(x)$ are allowed to be either compactly supported or unbounded at infinity. Therefore, we give a positive answer to a problem proposed by Ambrosetti and Malchiodi (2007) [2]. © 2010 Elsevier Masson SAS. All rights reserved.


MSC: 35J20; 35J60
Keywords: Bound state; Multi-peak solutions; Nonlinear Schrödinger equation; Potentials compactly supported or unbounded at infinity

## 1. Introduction

In this paper, we will consider the existence of concentrating solutions for the following nonlinear Schrödinger equations

$$
\left\{\begin{array}{l}
-\varepsilon^{2} \Delta u+V(x) u=K(x) u^{p}, \quad u>0, x \in \mathbb{R}^{N},  \tag{1.1}\\
u \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right),
\end{array}\right.
$$

where $\varepsilon>0$ is a small number, $1<p<(N+2) /(N-2)$ for $N \geqslant 3$, and $1<p<\infty$ for $N=1,2, V(x) \geqslant 0$ has a compact support, and $K(x) \geqslant 0$ may tend to zero or infinity as $|x| \rightarrow \infty, H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ is the usual Sobolev space $\left\{u \in D^{1,2}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right): \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}|u|^{2}<\infty\right\}$.

A basic motivation for the study of (1.1) comes from looking for standing waves of the type

$$
\psi(x, t)=e^{-\frac{i E t}{\varepsilon}} u(x)
$$

[^0]for the following nonlinear Schrödinger equations
\[

$$
\begin{equation*}
i \varepsilon \frac{\partial \psi}{\partial t}=-\frac{\varepsilon^{2}}{2 m} \Delta_{x} \psi+(V(x)+E) \psi-K(x)|\psi|^{p-2} \psi, \quad(t, x) \in \mathbb{R}_{+} \times \mathbb{R}^{N}, \tag{1.2}
\end{equation*}
$$

\]

where $\varepsilon$ is the Planck constant, $i$ is the imaginary unit. Problem (1.2) arises in many applications. For example, in some problems arising in nonlinear optics, in plasma physics and in condensed matter physics, the presence of many particles leads one to consider nonlinear terms which simulate the interaction effect among them. The function $V(x)$ represents the potential acting on the particle and $K(x)$ represents a particle-interaction term, which avoids spreading of the wave packets in the time-dependent version of the above equation. A solution $\psi$ is referred to as a bound state of (1.2) if $\psi \rightarrow 0$ as $|x| \rightarrow+\infty$. Furthermore, to describe the transition from quantum to classical mechanics, we let $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$ and thus the existence of solutions $\psi_{\varepsilon}(x, t)$ of (1.2) for small $\varepsilon$ (which is called semiclassic state) has an important physical interest.

There are a lot of works on problem (1.1). In [23], Floer and Weinstein considered the case $N=1, p=3$ and $K(x) \equiv 1$. By using a Lyapunov-Schmidt reduction argument, they constructed a positive solution $u_{\varepsilon}$ to problem (1.1) which concentrates around the critical point of potential $V(x)$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$. Their method and results were later generalized by Oh [31,32] to the higher-dimensional case with $1<p<(N+2) /(N-2)$ and multi-bump solutions concentrating near several non-degenerate critical points of $V(x)$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$ were obtained. Existence of solutions concentrating at one or several points to problem (1.1) under different conditions has also been obtained in $[4,6,12$, 18-21,26,27,30,33,35-37].

We also mention some results on problem (1.1) in the case that $\liminf _{|x| \rightarrow \infty} V(x)>0, Z=:\left\{x \in \mathbb{R}^{N}\right.$ : $V(x)=0\} \neq \emptyset$, which was referred to as the critical frequency in [8]. In [8,9], it was shown that problem (1.1) admits a ground state concentrating on $Z$. Later, if $Z$ consists of several components, Cao and Peng in [15], Cao and Noussair in [13] and Cao, Noussair and Yan in [14] proved that problem (1.1) has multi-peak solutions which concentrate simultaneously on some prescribed components of $Z$ or some points on which $V(x)$ does not vanish. For more results, we can refer to $[10,11,34]$ and the references therein.

In all the works mentioned above, it is worth pointing out that the common assumptions are $\liminf _{|x| \rightarrow \infty} V(x)>0$ and $0<K(x)<c$ in $\mathbb{R}^{N}$ for some $c>0$. The assumption $\lim \inf _{|x| \rightarrow \infty} V(x)>0$ guarantees that the norm $\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}|\nabla u|^{2}+V(x) u^{2}\right)^{1 / 2}$ is not weaker than the usual norm of Sobolev space $H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$, and thus ensures that the solutions of (1.1) are bound states which are the most relevant from the physical point of view. Hence, by the boundedness of $K(x)$, the energy functionals corresponding to the equations are well defined in $H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ and the variational theory can be used directly. However, if the potential $V(x)$ decays to zero or is compactly supported, or $K(x)$ approaches infinity at infinity, variational theory in $H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ cannot be used, nor can one apply the perturbation methods, as in [4], since the spectrum of the linear operator $-\Delta+V(x)$ is $[0,+\infty)$, see [7]. Therefore, the methods used in the previous papers cannot be employed any more in the present situation.

Recently, the case in which $V(x)$ and $K(x)$ may decay to zero as $|x| \rightarrow \infty$ has been investigated. In [1], it is proved that if the potentials $V(x)$ and $K(x)$ are smooth and satisfy

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \left(V_{0}\right) \quad \exists \gamma_{0}, \gamma_{1}>0: \frac{\gamma_{0}}{1+|x|^{\alpha}} \leqslant V(x) \leqslant \gamma_{1}, \\
& \left(K_{0}\right) \quad \exists \beta, k: \quad 0<K(x) \leqslant \frac{k}{1+|x|^{\beta}},
\end{aligned}
$$

then (1.1) has a ground state solution for $0 \leqslant \alpha<2$ provided that $\varepsilon$ is sufficiently small and $\sigma<p<(N+2) /(N-2)$, where

$$
\sigma= \begin{cases}\frac{N+2}{N-2}-\frac{4 \beta}{\alpha(N-2)}, & \text { if } 0<\beta<\alpha \\ 1 & \text { otherwise }\end{cases}
$$

In [3], this result was generalized to the case $1<p<(N+2) /(N-2)$ and $0 \leqslant \alpha \leqslant 2$. Moreover, setting

$$
G(x)=[V(x)]^{\frac{p+1}{p-1}-\frac{N}{2}}[K(x)]^{-\frac{2}{p-1}}
$$

which is referred to as a ground energy function introduced in [36], then it is verified that for any isolated stable stationary point $x_{0}$ of $G(x)$, Eq. (1.1) has a bound state concentrating at $x_{0}$ for $\varepsilon$ sufficiently small. When $Z=\left\{x \in \mathbb{R}^{N}\right.$ :
$V(x)=0\} \neq \emptyset$ and $V(x), K(x)$ satisfy $\left(V_{0}\right)$ and $\left(K_{0}\right)$ at infinity respectively, Ambrosetti and Wang in [5] obtained a ground state of (1.1) which concentrates at some point $x^{*} \in Z$ in the case $0 \leqslant \alpha<2$ and $\sigma<p<\frac{N+2}{N-2}$. Similar results can also be found in [10,11].

An open problem left, as proposed by Ambrosetti and Malchiodi in [2], is what happens if the potential $V(x)$ decays faster than $|x|^{-2}$ at infinity or has compact support? More precisely, it was illustrated in [2] the following: "Is it possible to handle potentials with faster decay, or compactly supported? ... . Clearly, the approach used so far cannot be repeated. However, any result, positive or negative, would be interesting."

Concerning this open problem, some interesting results appeared recently. In [16], the case $V(x) \sim|x|^{\alpha}$ at infinity with $\alpha \geqslant-4$ was considered by a constructive argument and multi-peak bound states with prescribed number of maximum points approaching to a local minimum point of the function $G(x)$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$ were obtained. The case that $V(x)$ has compact support, which is the most difficult case, was studied by Fei and Yin in [22], where it was shown that problem (1.1) admits a bound state with exact one local maximum point $x_{\varepsilon}$ which tends to a minimum point of the function $G(x)$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$. The method introduced in [22] is quite new. Precisely, the authors proved a mountain pass solution to a modified problem and then obtained a type of the weak Harnack inequality, by which they proved that the solution decays at infinity at the desired speed and hence is a bound state solving the original problem. However, the solution obtained in [22] is in some sense a least energy solution and indeed one-peaked. Moreover, because of the absence of an exact estimate to the energy related to the solution, their argument cannot be adopted to look for multi-peak solutions with higher energy. In this paper, we intend to focus on this problem.

We assume that $V(x), K(x)$ satisfy the following conditions:
$\left(H_{1}\right) . V(x) \in C\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ is compactly supported, $V(x) \geqslant 0$ and $V(x) \not \equiv 0 ; K(x) \in C\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right), K(x) \geqslant 0$.
$\left(H_{2}\right)$. There exist smooth bounded domains $\Lambda_{i}$ of $\mathbb{R}^{N}$, mutually disjoint such that $V(x)>0$ and $K(x)>0$ on $\bar{\Lambda}_{i}$, $i=1, \ldots, k$, and

$$
0<c_{i} \equiv \inf _{x \in \Lambda_{i}} G(x)<\inf _{x \in \partial \Lambda_{i}} G(x)
$$

$\left(H_{3}\right)$. There exist constants $k_{1}>0, \beta_{1}<2$ such that

$$
0 \leqslant K(x) \leqslant k_{1}(1+|x|)^{\beta_{1}} \quad \text { in } \mathbb{R}^{N}
$$

Our main result for Eq. (1.1) is as follows:
Theorem 1.1. Assume $N \geqslant 5$ and $\max \left(1,\left(N+\beta_{1}\right) /(N-2)\right)<p<(N+2)(N-2)$. Under the assumptions $\left(H_{1}\right)-\left(H_{3}\right)$, there is an $\varepsilon_{0}>0$ such that for every $0<\varepsilon<\varepsilon_{0}$, problem (1.1) admits a positive solution $u_{\varepsilon} \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$. Moreover, $u_{\varepsilon}$ possesses exactly $k$ local maxima $x_{\varepsilon}^{i} \in \Lambda_{i}, i=1, \ldots, k$, which satisfy that $G\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right) \rightarrow \inf _{x \in \Lambda_{i}} G(x)$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$.

Remark 1.1. We actually prove the existence of solutions concentrating simultaneously at several points of a set $\left\{\xi_{1}, \ldots, \xi_{k}\right\}$, where for each $i=1, \ldots, k, \xi_{i}$ satisfies $G\left(\xi_{i}\right)=c_{i}$.

Remark 1.2. From the proof of Theorem 1.1, we can see that Theorem 1.1 holds if $V(x)$ is a nonnegative continuous function in $\mathbb{R}^{N}$. In particular, Theorem 1.1 remains true if $V(x)$ decays faster than $|x|^{-\alpha}$ including the case that $V(x)$ decays faster than $e^{-\beta|x|}$, where $\alpha>0, \beta>0$. Furthermore, if $V(x)=1 /|x|^{2}$ near infinity, which is related to the well-known Hardy inequality, our result is also true.

In order to obtain the existence of peaked solutions we use variational methods and penalization techniques. Since $\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} V(x) u^{2}<\infty$ cannot guarantee that $u$ is a bound state and $\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} K(x)|u|^{p+1}$ may not make sense for $u \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ due to the fact that $V(x)$ may vanish or $K(x)$ may be unbounded at infinity, we will employ a penalization argument which needs to modify the nonlinear term $K(x) u^{p}$ in (1.1). To obtain multi-peak bound states with the desired number of peaks, we must give an exact estimate to the functional energy corresponding to the solution $u_{\varepsilon}$ of the modified problem. For this, we penalize the functional related to the modified problem by adding a penalization $P_{\varepsilon}(u)$ introduced in [19], which can also be used to prevent the concentration outside of $\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} \Lambda_{i}$. To ensure that $u_{\varepsilon}$ solves the original problem (1.1), we use an argument similar to [22] to obtain the weak Harnack inequality and thus find the decay rate of $u_{\varepsilon}$ outside $\Lambda_{i}$. As we can see later, for the case $k=1$, our method can simplify the proof in [22]. Moreover, our result is true for the case that $V(x)$ decays faster than $|x|^{\alpha}(\forall \alpha<0)$ at infinity.

This paper is organized as follows: In Section 2 we define the modified functional needed for the proof of Theorem 1.1, and prove some preliminary results. Section 3 is devoted to the proof of Theorem 1.1. In this paper, the notations $C, C_{1}, \ldots$ denote the generic positive constants depending only on $V(x), K(x), p$.

## 2. Preliminaries

Let $\Lambda=\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} \Lambda_{i}$. For $\xi \in \Lambda$, consider the following equation

$$
\left\{\begin{array}{l}
-\Delta u(x)+V(\xi) u(x)=K(\xi) u^{p}(x), \quad u(x)>0, x \in \mathbb{R}^{N},  \tag{2.1}\\
u \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right) .
\end{array}\right.
$$

The functional corresponding to (2.1) is defined as

$$
\begin{equation*}
I_{\xi}(u)=\frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}|\nabla u|^{2}+\frac{V(\xi)}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}|u|^{2}-\frac{K(\xi)}{p+1} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}|u|^{p+1} \tag{2.2}
\end{equation*}
$$

The following function

$$
\begin{equation*}
G(\xi)=\inf _{u \in \mathcal{M}^{\xi}} I_{\xi}(u) \tag{2.3}
\end{equation*}
$$

is referred to as ground energy function of (2.1) (see [36]), where $\mathcal{M}^{\xi}$ is the Nehari manifold defined by

$$
\mathcal{M}^{\xi}=\left\{u \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right) \backslash\{0\}:\left\langle I_{\xi}^{\prime}(u), u\right\rangle=0\right\} .
$$

For further properties of $G(\xi)$, one can see [36]. It is shown in [24,28] that, up to translations, (2.1) has a unique solution $U_{\xi}(x)$, which is radially symmetric and decays exponentially at infinity. Moreover,

$$
\begin{equation*}
G(\xi)=I_{\xi}\left(U_{\xi}\right) . \tag{2.4}
\end{equation*}
$$

Let $E_{\varepsilon}$ be a class of weighted Sobolev space defined as follows

$$
\left\{u \in D^{1,2}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right) \mid \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}|\nabla u|^{2}+V(x)|u|^{2}\right)<\infty\right\}
$$

where $D^{1,2}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)=\left\{\left.u \in L^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right) \right\rvert\, \nabla u \in L^{2}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)\right\}$. The norm of the space $E_{\varepsilon}$ is denoted by

$$
\|u\|_{\varepsilon}=\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}|\nabla u|^{2}+V(x)|u|^{2}\right)\right)^{1 / 2}
$$

Under the assumptions $\left(H_{1}\right)$ and $\left(H_{2}\right)$, we can deduce from the Sobolev inequality the following:
Lemma 2.1. Assume that $\left(H_{1}\right),\left(H_{2}\right)$ hold true, then for each $\varepsilon \in(0,1]$, there exists a constant $C_{1}>0$ independent of $\varepsilon$ such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{\Lambda} K(x)|u|^{p+1} \leqslant C_{1} \varepsilon^{-\frac{N(p-1)}{2}}\|u\|_{\varepsilon}^{p+1}, \quad \forall u \in E_{\varepsilon} . \tag{2.5}
\end{equation*}
$$

Next we define the first modification of our functional. Set

$$
f_{\varepsilon}(x, t)=\min \left\{K(x)\left(t^{+}\right)^{p}, \frac{\varepsilon^{3}}{1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}} t^{+}, \frac{\varepsilon}{1+|x|^{N}}\right\}
$$

where $t^{+}=\max \{t, 0\}$, and $\theta_{0}>2$ will be suitably chosen later on.
Define

$$
g_{\varepsilon}(x, \xi)=\chi_{\Lambda}(x) K(x)\left(\xi^{+}\right)^{p}+\left(1-\chi_{\Lambda}(x)\right) f_{\varepsilon}(x, \xi)
$$

where $\chi_{\Lambda}(x)$ represents the characteristic function of the set $\Lambda$. Denote $G_{\varepsilon}(x, u)=\int_{0}^{u} g_{\varepsilon}(x, \tau) d \tau$.

Now we define the modified functional $L_{\varepsilon}: E_{\varepsilon} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ as

$$
L_{\varepsilon}(u)=\frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}|\nabla u|^{2}+V(x) u^{2}\right)-\frac{1}{p+1} \int_{\Lambda} K(x)\left(u^{+}\right)^{p+1}-\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} F_{\varepsilon}(x, u),
$$

where $F_{\varepsilon}(x, u)=\left(1-\chi_{\Lambda}(x)\right) \int_{0}^{u} f_{\varepsilon}(x, \tau) d \tau$.
For $u \in E_{\varepsilon}$, due to $\theta_{0}>2$, we see that

$$
\begin{align*}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} F_{\varepsilon}(x, u) & \leqslant \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} \frac{\varepsilon^{3}}{1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}} u^{2} \leqslant C \varepsilon^{3}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda}|u|^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{N}} \\
& \leqslant C \varepsilon^{3} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}|\nabla u|^{2} \leqslant C \varepsilon\|u\|_{\varepsilon}^{2} \tag{2.6}
\end{align*}
$$

It follows from (2.5) and (2.6) that $L_{\varepsilon}(u)$ is well defined in $E_{\varepsilon}$.
Next, we introduce the second modification of the functional. Assume $G\left(\xi_{i}\right)=c_{i}, \xi_{i} \in \Lambda_{i}$. Let $\sigma_{i}>0$ be such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sup _{\Lambda_{i}} G(x) \leqslant c_{i}+\sigma_{i} \tag{2.7}
\end{equation*}
$$

and assume that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{i=1}^{k} \sigma_{i}<\frac{1}{2} \min \left\{c_{i} \mid i=1, \ldots, k\right\} \tag{2.8}
\end{equation*}
$$

This can be achieved by making $\Lambda_{i}$ smaller if necessary. For mutually disjoint open sets $\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}$ compactly containing $\Lambda_{i}$ and satisfying $V(x)>0$ on the closure of $\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}$, we define on $E_{\varepsilon}$ the functional

$$
\begin{equation*}
L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)=\frac{1}{2} \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}|\nabla u|^{2}+V(x) u^{2}\right)-\frac{1}{p+1} \int_{\Lambda_{i}} K(x)\left(u^{+}\right)^{p+1}-\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i} \backslash \Lambda_{i}} F_{\varepsilon}(x, u) \tag{2.9}
\end{equation*}
$$

and the penalization

$$
\begin{equation*}
P_{\varepsilon}(u)=M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}^{2} \tag{2.10}
\end{equation*}
$$

The constant $M$ will be chosen later. Now set

$$
J_{\varepsilon}(u)=L_{\varepsilon}(u)+P_{\varepsilon}(u)
$$

Then it follows from Proposition A. 1 in Appendix A that functional $J_{\varepsilon}$ is of class $C^{1}$. We show next that $J_{\varepsilon}$ satisfies the Palais-Smale condition.

Lemma 2.2. Let $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$ be a sequence in $E_{\varepsilon}$ such that $J_{\varepsilon}\left(u_{n}\right)$ is bounded and $J_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right) \rightarrow 0$. Then $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$ has a convergent subsequence.

Proof. We first prove that the sequence $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$ is bounded in $E_{\varepsilon}$.
Similarly to (2.6), we have

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left|\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}(x, u) u\right| \leqslant C \varepsilon\|u\|_{\varepsilon}^{2}, \quad \forall u \in E_{\varepsilon} \tag{2.11}
\end{equation*}
$$

For a fixed $q \in(2, p+1)$, by (2.6) and (2.11), we have

$$
\begin{align*}
L_{\varepsilon}\left(u_{n}\right)-\frac{1}{q}\left\langle L_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle= & \left(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{q}\right) \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right)+\left(\frac{1}{q}-\frac{1}{p+1}\right) \int_{\Lambda} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p+1} \\
& +\frac{1}{q} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{n}-\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} F_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) \\
\geqslant & C \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right) . \tag{2.12}
\end{align*}
$$

Similarly, we find

$$
\begin{equation*}
L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)-\frac{1}{q}\left\langle L_{\varepsilon}^{i \prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle \geqslant C \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right) \tag{2.13}
\end{equation*}
$$

On the other hand, noting that

$$
\left\langle P_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle=M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}}\left\langle L_{\varepsilon}^{i \prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle,
$$

we derive from (2.13) that

$$
\begin{aligned}
P_{\varepsilon}\left(u_{n}\right)-\frac{1}{q}\left\langle P_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle= & M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}^{2} \\
& -\frac{1}{q} M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}}\left\langle L_{\varepsilon}^{i \prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle \\
= & M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+} \\
& \times\left[\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}-\frac{1}{q}\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}}\left\{L_{\varepsilon}^{i \prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right)\right] \\
\geqslant & M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+} \\
& \times\left[\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}-\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right] \\
\geqslant & -M \sum_{i=1}^{k} \varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+} \\
\geqslant & -M M_{i=1}^{\frac{1}{2}} \varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} P_{\varepsilon}^{\frac{1}{2}}\left(u_{n}\right)=-C \varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}} P_{\varepsilon}^{\frac{1}{2}}\left(u_{n}\right) .
\end{aligned}
$$

Hence, by the fact that $P_{\varepsilon}\left(u_{n}\right) \leqslant M \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right)$, we get

$$
\begin{align*}
C_{\varepsilon} & \geqslant J_{\varepsilon}\left(u_{n}\right)-\frac{1}{q}\left\langle J_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle \\
& \geqslant C \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right)-C \varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right)\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}, \tag{2.14}
\end{align*}
$$

which implies that $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$ is bounded in $E_{\varepsilon}$.

Since $E_{\varepsilon} \hookrightarrow D^{1,2}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right) \hookrightarrow H_{\mathrm{loc}}^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$, the boundedness of $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$ in $E_{\varepsilon}$ implies that there exists $u_{0} \in E_{\varepsilon}$ satisfying, after passing to a subsequence if necessary,

$$
u_{n} \rightarrow u_{0} \quad \text { weakly in } E_{\varepsilon}, \quad u_{n} \rightarrow u_{0} \quad \text { strongly in } L_{\mathrm{loc}}^{q}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)
$$

for $2 \leqslant q<2 N /(N-2)$.
Now, to complete the proof, it suffices to prove that $\left\|u_{n}\right\|_{\varepsilon} \rightarrow\left\|u_{0}\right\|_{\varepsilon}$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$.
By $\left\langle J_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{0}\right\rangle \rightarrow 0$, we see

$$
\begin{align*}
& \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{0}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n} u_{0}\right)-\int_{\Lambda} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p} u_{0}-\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{0} \\
& \quad+M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+} L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}^{-\frac{1}{2}} \\
& \quad \times\left(\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{0}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n} u_{0}\right)-\int_{\Lambda_{i}} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p} u_{0}-\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i} \backslash \Lambda_{i}} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{0}\right) \\
& \quad=o_{n}(1) . \tag{2.15}
\end{align*}
$$

In addition, from $\left\langle J_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{n}\right), u_{n}\right\rangle=o_{n}(1)\left\|u_{n}\right\|$ and the boundedness of $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$, we have

$$
\begin{align*}
& \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right)-\int_{\Lambda} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p+1}-\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{n} \\
& \quad+M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+} L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}^{-\frac{1}{2}} \\
& \quad \times\left(\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right)-\int_{\Lambda_{i}} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p+1}-\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i} \backslash \Lambda_{i}} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{n}\right) \\
& \quad=o_{n}(1) . \tag{2.16}
\end{align*}
$$

On the other hand, we find

$$
\begin{align*}
& \lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} V(x) u_{n}^{2}=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} V(x) u_{n} u_{0}  \tag{2.17}\\
& \lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\Lambda} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p+1}=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\Lambda} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p} u_{0}  \tag{2.18}\\
& \lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}} V(x) u_{n}^{2}=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}} V(x) u_{n} u_{0}  \tag{2.19}\\
& \lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\Lambda_{i}} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p+1}=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\Lambda_{i}} K(x)\left(u_{n}^{+}\right)^{p} u_{0}  \tag{2.20}\\
& \lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i} \backslash \Lambda_{i}} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{n}=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i} \backslash \Lambda_{i}} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{0} \tag{2.21}
\end{align*}
$$

and for any fixed large $R>0$ such that $\Lambda \subset B_{R}(0)$,

$$
\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{B_{R}(0) \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{n}=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{B_{R}(0) \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{0} .
$$

We will prove that for any given $\delta>0$, there exists $R>0$ such that for all $n$

$$
\left|\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash B_{R}(0)} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{0}\right|<\delta, \quad\left|\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash B_{R}(0)} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{n}\right|<\delta
$$

We just check the first inequality since the second one can be checked in a similar way. As in the proof of (2.6), we have

$$
\begin{aligned}
\left|\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash B_{R}(0)} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{0}\right| & \leqslant \varepsilon^{3} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash B_{R}(0)} \frac{\left|u_{n} \| u_{0}\right|}{1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}} \\
& \leqslant \varepsilon^{3}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash B_{R}(0)} \frac{1}{\left(1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}\right)^{\frac{N}{2}}}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}}\left\|u_{n}\right\|_{L^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)}\left\|u_{0}\right\|_{L^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)} \\
& \leqslant \frac{\varepsilon}{R^{\theta_{0}-2}}\left\|u_{n}\right\|_{\varepsilon}\left\|u_{0}\right\|_{\varepsilon} \rightarrow 0 \quad \text { as } R \rightarrow \infty .
\end{aligned}
$$

So

$$
\begin{equation*}
\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{n}=\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right) u_{0} . \tag{2.22}
\end{equation*}
$$

From the boundedness of $\left\{u_{n}\right\}$, we have

$$
\begin{equation*}
M\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right)_{+} L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{n}\right)_{+}^{-\frac{1}{2}}=a_{i}+o_{n}(1) \tag{2.23}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $a_{i} \geqslant 0, i=1, \ldots, k$ are constants. So inserting (2.17)-(2.23) into (2.15) and (2.16), we obtain

$$
o_{n}(1)=\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} \varepsilon^{2}\left(\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}-\left|\nabla u_{0}\right|^{2}\right)+\sum_{i=1}^{k}\left(a_{i}+o_{n}(1)\right) \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}} \varepsilon^{2}\left(\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}-\left|\nabla u_{0}\right|^{2}\right) \geqslant o_{n}(1) .
$$

Thus, we have $\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}=\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left|\nabla u_{0}\right|^{2}$ and hence

$$
\lim _{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{n}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{n}^{2}\right)=\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{0}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{0}^{2}\right) .
$$

So, the proof of Lemma 2.2 is completed.
The previous lemma makes it possible to use the critical point theory to find critical points of the functional $J_{\varepsilon}$. We will formulate an appropriate minimax problem for $J_{\varepsilon}$.

As in [17], we define a class of functions $\Gamma$. A continuous function $\gamma:[0,1]^{k} \rightarrow E_{\varepsilon}$ is in $\Gamma$ if there are continuous functions $g_{i}:[0,1] \rightarrow E_{\varepsilon}$ for $i=1, \ldots, k$ satisfying
(i) $\operatorname{supp}\left\{g_{i}(\tau)\right\} \subset \Lambda_{i}$ for all $\tau \in[0,1]$;
(ii) $\gamma\left(\tau_{1}, \ldots, \tau_{k}\right)=\sum_{i=1}^{k} g_{i}\left(\tau_{i}\right)$ for all $\left(\tau_{1}, \ldots, \tau_{k}\right) \in \partial[0,1]^{k}$;
(iii) $g_{i}(0)=0$ and $L_{\varepsilon}\left(g_{i}(1)\right)<0$;
(iv) $J_{\varepsilon}(\gamma(t)) \leqslant \varepsilon^{N}\left(\sum_{i=1}^{k} c_{i}-\sigma\right)$ for all $t \in \partial[0,1]^{k}$,
where $0<\sigma<\frac{1}{2} \min \left\{c_{i} \mid i=1, \ldots, k\right\}$ is a fixed number.
Define

$$
C_{\varepsilon}=\inf _{\gamma \in \Gamma_{t \in[0,1]^{k}} \sup _{\varepsilon}(\gamma(t)) . . . . . . . .}
$$

As in [19], we can prove that $\Gamma$ is non-empty and

## Lemma 2.3.

$$
C_{\varepsilon}=\varepsilon^{N}\left(\sum_{i=1}^{k} c_{i}+o(1)\right) .
$$

Proof. The proof is similar to Lemma 2.3 in [15] (see also [19, Lemma 1.2]), and thus we omit it.
From Lemma 2.2 and Lemma 2.3, we conclude that there exists a critical point $u_{\varepsilon} \in E_{\varepsilon}$ of $J_{\varepsilon}$ such that $J_{\varepsilon}\left(u_{\varepsilon}\right)=C_{\varepsilon}$.
We define the local weights

$$
\rho_{\varepsilon}^{i}=M\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon}\right)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon}\right)_{+}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}},
$$

and then the function

$$
\rho_{\varepsilon}=\sum_{i=1}^{k} \rho_{\varepsilon}^{i} \chi_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}} .
$$

The critical point $u_{\varepsilon}$ satisfies in the weak sense

$$
\begin{equation*}
\varepsilon^{2} \operatorname{div}\left(\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}\right) \nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right)-\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}\right) V(x) u_{\varepsilon}+\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}\right) g_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{\varepsilon}\right)=0, \tag{2.24}
\end{equation*}
$$

and

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}\right)\left(\varepsilon^{2} \nabla u_{\varepsilon} \nabla \varphi+V(x) u_{\varepsilon} \varphi\right)=\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}\right) g_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{\varepsilon}\right) \varphi, \quad \forall \varphi \in E_{\varepsilon} . \tag{2.25}
\end{equation*}
$$

Set $\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon}=\left\{y \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \mid \varepsilon y \in \Lambda_{i}\right\}$ and $\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon}=\left\{y \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \mid \varepsilon y \in \tilde{\Lambda}_{i}\right\}$. Let $v_{\varepsilon}(y)=u_{\varepsilon}(\varepsilon y)$ for $y \in \mathbb{R}^{N}$, then we see

$$
\begin{equation*}
\operatorname{div}\left(\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}(\varepsilon y)\right) \nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right)-\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}(\varepsilon y)\right) V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}+\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}(\varepsilon y)\right) g_{\varepsilon}\left(\varepsilon y, v_{\varepsilon}\right)=0 \tag{2.26}
\end{equation*}
$$

Finally, proceeding as in the first part of the proof of Lemma 2.2, we obtain from the estimates on $C_{\varepsilon}$ given in Lemma 2.3 that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \leqslant C \varepsilon^{N}, \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \leqslant C . \tag{2.27}
\end{equation*}
$$

## 3. Proof of Theorem 1.1

In this section, we will prove that $\rho_{\varepsilon} \equiv 0$ and $u_{\varepsilon}$ is indeed a solution of the original equation (1.1).
Given $R>0$ and set $A \subset \mathbb{R}^{N}$, we denote by $N_{R}(A)$ the set $\{y \mid \operatorname{dist}(y, A)<R\}$. The following lemma means that $v_{\varepsilon}$ is small away from the set $\Lambda^{\varepsilon}=\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon}$.

Lemma 3.1. There exists a $C>0$ such that, for any given $R>0$, one has

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \leqslant \frac{C}{R}, \tag{3.1}
\end{equation*}
$$

for $\varepsilon$ sufficiently small.
Proof. For any given $R>0, \varepsilon>0$, we may choose smooth cut-off functions $0 \leqslant \psi_{i, R}^{\varepsilon} \leqslant 1$ such that

$$
\psi_{i, R}^{\varepsilon}(y)= \begin{cases}1, & \text { if } \operatorname{dist}\left(y, \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon}\right)<R / 2,  \tag{3.2}\\ 0, & \text { if } \operatorname{dist}\left(y, \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon}\right)>R,\end{cases}
$$

and $\left|\nabla \psi_{i, R}^{\varepsilon}\right| \leqslant 4 / R$. Then set $\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}=1-\sum_{i=1}^{k} \psi_{i, R}^{\varepsilon}$.

Similarly to (2.6), we have

$$
\begin{aligned}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}\right)^{2} f_{\varepsilon}\left(\varepsilon y, v_{\varepsilon}\right) v_{\varepsilon} & \leqslant \varepsilon^{3} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}} \frac{\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon} v_{\varepsilon}\right)^{2}}{1+|\varepsilon y|^{\theta_{0}}} \\
& \leqslant \varepsilon^{3}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon} v_{\varepsilon}\right)^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{N}}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(\frac{1}{1+|\varepsilon y|^{\theta_{0}}}\right)^{\frac{N}{2}}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \\
& \leqslant \varepsilon^{3} C\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left|\nabla\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon} v_{\varepsilon}\right)\right|^{2}\right)\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}} \frac{1}{\left(1+|\varepsilon y|^{\theta_{0}}\right)^{\frac{N}{2}}}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \\
& =C \varepsilon\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left|\nabla\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon} v_{\varepsilon}\right)\right|^{2}\right)\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} \frac{1}{\left(1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}\right)^{\frac{N}{2}}}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \\
& =C \varepsilon \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left|\nabla\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon} v_{\varepsilon}\right)\right|^{2} \quad \\
& \leqslant C \varepsilon \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}\right)^{2}\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+C \varepsilon \int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right) \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left|\nabla \eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}\right|^{2} v_{\varepsilon}^{2} .
\end{aligned}
$$

Using the test function $\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}\right)^{2} v_{\varepsilon}$ in (2.26), one gets

$$
\begin{align*}
C \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \leqslant & \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)-C \varepsilon \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}\right)^{2}\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2} \\
& -C \varepsilon \int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right) \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left|\nabla \eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}\right|^{2} v_{\varepsilon}^{2} \\
\leqslant & \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}(\varepsilon y)\right)\left(\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon}\right)^{2}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}-f_{\varepsilon}\left(\varepsilon y, v_{\varepsilon}\right) v_{\varepsilon}\right) \\
= & -2 \int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right) \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(1+\rho_{\varepsilon}(\varepsilon y)\right) v_{\varepsilon} \eta_{R}^{\varepsilon} \nabla v_{\varepsilon} \nabla \eta_{R}^{\varepsilon} . \tag{3.3}
\end{align*}
$$

Note that $\rho_{\varepsilon}$ is uniformly bounded by a constant possibly depending on $M$. Using this, the choice of $\eta_{R}^{\varepsilon},\left(H_{1}\right),\left(H_{2}\right)$ and (2.27), we find that (3.1) follows immediately from (3.3).

Before we proceed further, we give a preliminary lemma.
Lemma 3.2. Assume that $v \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right) \cap C\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ is nonnegative and satisfies the equation

$$
\Delta v-v+\chi_{\left\{x_{1}<0\right\}} v^{p}=0, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^{N} .
$$

Then $v \equiv 0$.
Proof. Standard regularity arguments yield $v \in C^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ and $v \rightarrow 0, \nabla v \rightarrow 0$ as $|x| \rightarrow+\infty$. Using $\frac{\partial v}{\partial x_{1}}$ as a test function, we see

$$
\frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N-1}} d x^{\prime} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{\partial}{\partial x_{1}}\left(|\nabla v|^{2}+v^{2}\right) d x_{1}-\frac{1}{p+1} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N-1}} v^{p+1}\left(0, x^{\prime}\right) d x^{\prime}=0
$$

Noting that the first integral is zero, we obtain $v\left(0, x^{\prime}\right) \equiv 0$. Now, to prove that $v \equiv 0$ for $x_{1}>0$, we use $v \chi_{\left\{x_{1}>0\right\}} \in$ $H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ as a test function, and obtain that $v \chi_{\left\{x_{1}>0\right\}} \equiv 0$. This contradicts the strong maximum principle if $v \not \equiv 0$.

As a result, we complete the proof.
Lemma 3.3. Let $M$ be as in (2.10). Assume that $\varepsilon_{j} \rightarrow 0$ as $j \rightarrow+\infty$ and $\lim _{j \rightarrow+\infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N}>c_{i}+\sigma_{i}$. Then, for $M$ large enough,

$$
\lim _{j \rightarrow+\infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N} \geqslant 2 c_{i}
$$

Proof. We first prove that there exist numbers $S>0$ and $\rho>0$, such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sup _{y \in \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} \int_{B_{S}(y)} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2} \geqslant \rho, \quad \forall j \geqslant j_{0} . \tag{3.4}
\end{equation*}
$$

Indeed, since $\lim _{j \rightarrow+\infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N}>c_{i}+\sigma_{i}$, there is a $\lambda>0$ such that

$$
\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right) \geqslant \lambda, \quad \forall j \geqslant j_{0},
$$

then, Lemma 3.1 implies that for all $R>0$ large enough

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right) \geqslant \frac{\lambda}{2} . \tag{3.5}
\end{equation*}
$$

Now assume that (3.4) is false. Then we may assume that for all $S>0$, we have

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sup _{y \in \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} \int_{B_{S}(y)} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2} \rightarrow 0 \quad \text { as } j \rightarrow \infty \tag{3.6}
\end{equation*}
$$

Let $v_{j}^{R}=\psi_{R}^{j} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}$, where $\psi_{R}^{j}=\psi_{i, 2 R}^{\varepsilon_{j}}$ is given by (3.2). Then (3.6) implies

$$
\sup _{y \in \mathbb{R}^{N}} \int_{B_{S}(y)}\left(v_{j}^{R}\right)^{2} \rightarrow 0 \quad \text { as } j \rightarrow \infty
$$

for all $S>0$. Moreover, $\left\{v_{j}^{R}\right\}$ is a bounded sequence in $H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$. Then applying the concentration compactness principle (see Lemma I. 1 in [29] or Lemma 2.18 in [17]), we obtain that

$$
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(v_{j}^{R}\right)^{q} \rightarrow 0, \quad \text { for all } 2<q<2 N /(N-2),
$$

for each $R>0$. In particular

$$
\int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{p+1} \rightarrow 0
$$

Using $v_{j}^{R}$ as a test function in (2.26), we get

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right) \psi_{R}^{j} \\
& \quad=-\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} v_{\varepsilon_{j}} \nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}} \nabla \psi_{R}^{j}+\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} g_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}} \psi_{R}^{j}
\end{aligned}
$$

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \leqslant \frac{C}{R} \int_{N_{2 R}\left(\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \backslash N_{R}\left(\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)}\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|\left|v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|+\int_{\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} K\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{p+1}+\varepsilon_{j}^{3} \int_{N_{2 R}\left(\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \backslash \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} \frac{\left|v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}}{1+\left|\varepsilon_{j} y\right|^{\theta_{0}}} \\
& \leqslant C\left(\frac{1}{R}+\varepsilon_{j}^{3}\right) \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right)+C \int_{\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{p+1},
\end{aligned}
$$

which contradicts (3.5) if we choose $R$ and $j$ large enough. This shows the validity of (3.4). Thus, we may assume that there is a sequence $y_{j} \in \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}$ such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{B_{S}\left(y_{j}\right)} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2} \geqslant \rho>0, \quad \text { for all } j \geqslant j_{0} \tag{3.7}
\end{equation*}
$$

Let us now set $v_{j}(y)=v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(y_{j}+y\right)$ and $\Lambda_{i, y_{j}}^{\varepsilon_{j}}=\left\{y \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \mid y+y_{j} \in \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right\}$. Then $v_{j}$ is a bounded sequence in $H^{1}\left(\Lambda_{i, y_{j}}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)$, and hence we may assume that it converges weakly to a $v \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$.

Assume first that

$$
\operatorname{dist}\left(y_{j}, \partial \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \rightarrow \infty .
$$

Set $x_{j}=\varepsilon_{j} y_{j} \in \Lambda_{i}$ and assume that $x_{j} \rightarrow \xi \in \bar{\Lambda}_{i}$. Then $v$ satisfies in $\mathbb{R}^{N}$

$$
\begin{equation*}
\Delta v-V(\xi) v+K(\xi) v^{p}=0 \tag{3.8}
\end{equation*}
$$

and $v \not \equiv 0$, due to (3.7).
If

$$
\operatorname{dist}\left(y_{j}, \partial \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \leqslant C<\infty,
$$

we will have that $v$ satisfies an equation of the form

$$
\begin{equation*}
\Delta v-V(\xi) v+\chi_{\left\{x_{1}<0\right\}} K(\xi) v^{p}=0, \quad \text { in } \mathbb{R}^{N} \tag{3.9}
\end{equation*}
$$

But, we know $v \equiv 0$ in this case by Lemma 3.2. Hence $v>0$ solves (3.8) and is the unique critical point of the functional $I_{\xi}$. Thus we have

$$
c_{i} \leqslant I_{\xi}(v) \leqslant c_{i}+\sigma_{i} .
$$

Now, using the elliptic regularity theory we see that $v_{\varepsilon_{j}}$ converges strongly in the $H^{1}$-sense over any compact set. Passing to a further subsequence if necessary, we may find a sequence of positive numbers $R_{j} \rightarrow+\infty$ such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\lim _{j \rightarrow \infty} \int_{B_{R_{j}}\left(y_{j}\right)}\left[\frac{1}{2}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right)-G_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)\right]=I_{\xi}(v) \leqslant c_{i}+\sigma_{i} . \tag{3.10}
\end{equation*}
$$

Thus, combining the assumption $\lim _{j \rightarrow+\infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N}>c_{i}+\sigma_{i}$ and (3.10), we find that there exists $\eta>0$ such that for all large $j$,

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash B_{R_{j}}\left(y_{j}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right)>\eta>0 . \tag{3.11}
\end{equation*}
$$

Hence, similar to the proof of (3.4), we can find an $S>0$ and a sequence $\tilde{y}_{j} \in \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash B_{R_{j}}\left(y_{j}\right)$ such that

$$
\int_{B_{S}\left(\tilde{y}_{j}\right)} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2} \geqslant \rho>0
$$

Thus, we have again, after passing to a subsequence, the weak convergence of $v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\cdot+\tilde{y_{j}}\right)$ to a nonzero $\hat{v} \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$. Moreover, $\hat{v}$ satisfies the equation

$$
\Delta \hat{v}-V(\hat{\xi}) \hat{v}+K(\hat{\xi}) \hat{v}^{p}=0
$$

with $\hat{\xi} \in \bar{\Lambda}_{i}$ and $I_{\hat{\xi}}(\hat{v}) \geqslant c_{i}$.

Next, we verify that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\lim _{j \rightarrow \infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N} \geqslant I_{\xi}(v)+I_{\hat{\xi}}(\hat{v}) \geqslant 2 c_{i} . \tag{3.12}
\end{equation*}
$$

We recall that $v_{\varepsilon_{j}}$ satisfies on $\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}$ the equation

$$
\begin{equation*}
\Delta v_{\varepsilon_{j}}-V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}+g_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)=0 . \tag{3.13}
\end{equation*}
$$

To prove (3.12), firstly, we show that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\max _{x \in \partial \tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}(x) \rightarrow 0 \quad \text { as } j \rightarrow \infty . \tag{3.14}
\end{equation*}
$$

It suffices to show that $\max _{x \in \partial \tilde{\Lambda}_{i}} u_{\varepsilon_{j}}(x) \rightarrow 0$ as $j \rightarrow \infty$. Suppose on the contrary that there exist subsequences, still denoted by $\left\{\varepsilon_{j}\right\}$, and $\left\{\bar{y}_{j}\right\} \subset \partial \tilde{\Lambda}_{i}$, such that $\varepsilon_{j} \rightarrow 0, \bar{y}_{j} \rightarrow y_{0} \in \partial \tilde{\Lambda}_{i}$ as $j \rightarrow \infty$ and $u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\bar{y}_{j}\right) \geqslant \delta>0$. Choose $\rho>0$ such that $B_{\rho}\left(y_{0}\right) \subset \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} \Lambda_{i}\right)$. We may assume $\left\{\bar{y}_{j}\right\} \subset B_{\rho}\left(y_{0}\right)$. Using the above scaling technique on $B_{\rho}\left(y_{0}\right)$, it is easy to prove that $w_{j}(x):=u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\bar{y}_{j}+\varepsilon_{j} x\right)$ converges in $C^{2}$ on any compact set to some function $w \in H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$. Moreover $w$ satisfies

$$
-\Delta w+V\left(y_{0}\right) w=0, \quad \text { in } \mathbb{R}^{N},
$$

which implies $w \equiv 0$. This contradicts the fact that $\max w(x) \geqslant \delta$, and therefore (3.14) holds.
We use in (3.13) a test function of the form

$$
\phi=v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left[\psi\left(\left|y-y_{j}\right| / R\right)+\psi\left(\left|y-\tilde{y}_{j}\right| / R\right)\right],
$$

where $\psi$ is a $C^{\infty}$ function with $\psi(s)=0$ for $s \leqslant 1$ and $\psi(s)=1$ for $s \geqslant 2$. Denoting $N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y_{j}}\right)=B\left(y_{j}, R\right) \cup$ $B\left(\tilde{y}_{j}, R\right)$, by (3.14), we conclude that

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \quad \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right) \\
& \geqslant \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)} g_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}-\int_{N_{2 R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right) \backslash N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)} g_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}+\frac{C}{R}+o_{\varepsilon_{j}}(1) \\
& \geqslant 2 \int_{\Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)} G_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)+\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} g_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}+\frac{C}{R}+C(R)+o_{\varepsilon_{j}}(1) \\
& =2 \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)} G_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)+\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} g_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}-2 \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)}^{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\delta_{j}} \backslash \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} G_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)+\frac{C}{R}+C(R)+o_{\varepsilon_{j}}(1) \\
& =2 G_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)-\varepsilon_{j}^{3} \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} \frac{1}{1+\left|\varepsilon_{j} y\right|_{0}^{\theta_{0}}} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}+\frac{C}{R}+C(R)+o_{\varepsilon_{j}}(1) \\
& \tilde{\tilde{\Lambda}}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j} \backslash N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)} \\
& G_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)+\frac{C}{R}+C(R)+o_{\varepsilon_{j}}(1),
\end{aligned}
$$

where $C(R) \rightarrow 0$ as $R \rightarrow+\infty$, and we have used

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} \frac{1}{1+\left|\varepsilon_{j} y\right|^{\theta_{0}}} v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2} \leqslant C \int_{\tilde{\Lambda}_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}} \backslash \Lambda_{i}^{\varepsilon_{j}}} V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2} \leqslant C \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2} . \tag{3.15}
\end{equation*}
$$

Thus, it gives

$$
L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N} \geqslant \int_{N_{R}\left(y_{j}, \tilde{y}_{j}\right)}\left[\frac{1}{2}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right|^{2}+V\left(\varepsilon_{j} y\right) v_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{2}\right)-G_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\varepsilon_{j} y, v_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)\right]+O\left(\frac{1}{R}\right)+C(R)+o_{\varepsilon_{j}}(1),
$$

and

$$
\begin{aligned}
\lim _{j \rightarrow \infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N} \geqslant & \int_{B_{R}(0)}\left[\frac{1}{2}\left(|\nabla v|^{2}+V(\xi) v^{2}\right)-\frac{1}{p+1} K(\xi) v^{p+1}\right] \\
& +\int_{B_{R}(0)}\left[\frac{1}{2}\left(|\nabla \hat{v}|^{2}+V(\hat{\xi}) \hat{v}^{2}\right)-\frac{1}{p+1} K(\hat{\xi}) \hat{v}^{p+1}\right]+O\left(\frac{1}{R}\right)+C(R) .
\end{aligned}
$$

Consequently, choosing $R$ large, we get (3.12) and complete the proof.
Lemma 3.4. For $M>0$ sufficiently large,

$$
\begin{equation*}
\limsup _{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon}\right) \varepsilon^{-N} \leqslant c_{i}+\sigma_{i}, \quad \forall i=1, \ldots, k . \tag{3.16}
\end{equation*}
$$

Proof. Firstly, we prove that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\liminf _{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} L_{\varepsilon}\left(u_{\varepsilon}\right) \varepsilon^{-N} \geqslant 0 \tag{3.17}
\end{equation*}
$$

Choose a smooth cut-off function $0 \leqslant \psi_{R} \leqslant 1$ such that

$$
\psi_{R}(y)= \begin{cases}1, & \text { if } y \in N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right) \\ 0, & \text { if } y \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash N_{2 R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)\end{cases}
$$

and $\left|\nabla \psi_{R}\right| \leqslant 2 / R$.
Using in (3.13) the test function $v_{\varepsilon} \psi_{R}$ and noting (3.1) and (3.15), we have

$$
\begin{aligned}
\int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)+\frac{C}{R} & =\int_{N_{2 R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)} g_{\varepsilon}\left(\varepsilon y, v_{\varepsilon}\right) v_{\varepsilon} \psi_{R} \\
& \geqslant \int_{\Lambda^{\varepsilon}} K(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{p+1}-\varepsilon^{3} C \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}
\end{aligned}
$$

Similarly, using (2.6) and (3.1), we see

$$
\begin{aligned}
L_{\varepsilon}\left(v_{\varepsilon}\right) & =\frac{1}{2} \int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)-\int_{\Lambda^{\varepsilon}} G_{\varepsilon}\left(\varepsilon y, v_{\varepsilon}\right)-\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda^{\varepsilon}} F_{\varepsilon}\left(\varepsilon y, v_{\varepsilon}\right)+\frac{C}{R} \\
& \geqslant \frac{1}{2} \int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)-\frac{1}{p+1} \int_{\Lambda^{\varepsilon}} K(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{p+1}-\varepsilon C+\frac{C}{R} .
\end{aligned}
$$

Now, combining these two inequalities, we find that for $R$ large and $\varepsilon$ small,

$$
L_{\varepsilon}\left(v_{\varepsilon}\right) \geqslant\left(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{p+1}\right) \int_{N_{R}\left(\Lambda^{\varepsilon}\right)}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon y) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)-\frac{C}{R}-C \varepsilon>0,
$$

which implies (3.17).
Suppose that (3.16) is not true, then it follows from Lemma 3.3 that

$$
\lim _{j \rightarrow+\infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N} \geqslant 2 c_{i}
$$

which, together with (3.17), implies that

$$
\liminf _{j \rightarrow \infty} J_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N} \geqslant M\left\{\left(2 c_{i}\right)^{1 / 2}-\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{1 / 2}\right\}_{+}^{2}
$$

Using the upper estimate for the critical value $C_{\varepsilon_{j}}=J_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right)$, we obtain

$$
M\left\{\left(2 c_{i}\right)^{1 / 2}-\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{1 / 2}\right\}_{+}^{2} \leqslant \sum_{i=1}^{k} c_{i} .
$$

Therefore, if $M$ is such that

$$
M>\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} c_{i}}{\min \left\{\left(\left(2 c_{i}\right)^{1 / 2}-\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{1 / 2}\right)^{2} \mid i=1, \ldots, k\right\}},
$$

then we can get a contradiction to Lemma 2.3. Hence (3.16) is true for large $M$. This concludes the proof of Lemma 3.4.

Lemma 3.4 implies that $\rho_{\varepsilon} \equiv 0$ if $M$ is chosen large enough. In the sequel we fix $M$ so large that Lemma 3.4 holds true. Now, using the standard arguments (see [15, Lemma 3.4]) we can prove

## Lemma 3.5.

$$
\lim _{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} L_{\varepsilon}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon}\right) \varepsilon^{-N}=c_{i}, \quad \forall i=1, \ldots, k
$$

Lemma 3.5 implies that the concentration of $u_{\varepsilon}$ must occur around some $\bar{x}_{i} \in \Lambda_{i}$ with $G\left(\bar{x}_{i}\right)=c_{i}$. The concentration implies the presence of at least one local maximum $x_{\varepsilon}^{i}$ in each $\Lambda_{i}$, and also $\lim _{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} G\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)=c_{i}$.

Next we show the uniqueness of the maxima $x_{\varepsilon}^{i}$ in $\Lambda_{i}$. We argue by contradiction. Assume the existence of a sequence $\varepsilon_{j} \rightarrow 0$, such that $u_{\varepsilon_{j}}$ possesses two local maxima $\bar{x}_{j}^{1}, \bar{x}_{j}^{2} \in \Lambda_{i}$. Then $u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\bar{x}_{j}^{i}\right) \geqslant b(i=1,2)$ for some constant $b>0$. But, the fact that $\lim _{j \rightarrow \infty} G\left(\bar{x}_{j}^{i}\right)=c_{i}<\inf _{\partial \Lambda_{i}} G(x)$ implies that these sequences stay away from the boundary of $\Lambda_{i}$, so, if we let $v_{j}(x)=u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\left(\bar{x}_{j}^{1}+\varepsilon_{j} x\right)$, then after passing to a subsequence $v_{j}$ converges in the $C^{2}$ sense over compact sets to a solution $v$ in $H^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ of $\Delta v-V\left(\bar{\xi}^{1}\right) v+K\left(\bar{\xi}^{1}\right) v^{p}=0$, where $\lim _{j \rightarrow \infty} \bar{x}_{j}^{1}=\bar{\xi}^{1}$. The function $v$ has a local maximum at zero and is radially symmetric and radially decreasing, which implies that $\bar{x}_{j}=\varepsilon_{j}^{-1}\left(\bar{x}_{j}^{2}-\bar{x}_{j}^{1}\right)$ satisfies $\left|\bar{x}_{j}\right| \rightarrow \infty$. Now repeating the process in the proof of Lemma 3.3, we have

$$
\liminf _{n \rightarrow \infty} L_{\varepsilon_{j}}^{i}\left(u_{\varepsilon_{j}}\right) \varepsilon_{j}^{-N} \geqslant 2 c_{i},
$$

which is obviously a contradiction to Lemma 3.5 . So, in $\Lambda_{i}$, the maxima $x_{\varepsilon}^{i}$ of $u_{\varepsilon}$ are unique and in $\Lambda, u_{\varepsilon}$ has exactly $k$ peaks.

The above procedure indeed proves the following proposition.
Proposition 3.1. The sequences $\left\{x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right\} \subset \Lambda_{i}, i=1, \ldots, k$ satisfy that, for any $\nu>0$, there exist $\varepsilon_{1}(\nu), \rho_{1}(\nu)>0$ such that for $\varepsilon<\varepsilon_{1}(\nu)$

$$
\begin{equation*}
\varepsilon^{-N} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\varepsilon \rho_{1}(v)}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)<v, \tag{3.18}
\end{equation*}
$$

and

$$
\begin{equation*}
\operatorname{dist}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}, M^{i}\right)<v, \tag{3.19}
\end{equation*}
$$

here $M^{i}=\left\{\xi_{i} \in \Lambda_{i} \mid G\left(\xi_{i}\right)=c_{i}\right\}, i=1, \ldots, k$.
In the rest of this section, we will prove that $u_{\varepsilon}$ is indeed a solution of the original problem (1.1). Let $d_{0}=$ $\min \left\{\operatorname{dist}\left(\partial \Lambda_{i}, M^{i}\right), i=1, \ldots, k\right\}>0$, and $V_{1}=\min _{x \in \Lambda} V(x) / 2>0$. Fix two positive numbers $K_{0}>\max \left\{128,2 d_{0}\right\}$ and $c>0$ such that $c^{2} \geqslant\left(128 K_{0}^{2}\right) /\left(d_{0}^{2} V_{1}\right)$.

Set $\nu_{0}=\min \left\{d_{0} / K_{0},\left(8 C_{1}\right)^{-\frac{2}{p-1}}\right\}$ and $\varepsilon_{2}=\min \left\{\varepsilon_{1}\left(v_{0}\right), d_{0} /\left(K_{0} \rho_{1}\left(\nu_{0}\right)\right),(\ln 2) / c\right\}$, where $C_{1}$ is defined in (2.5), $\varepsilon_{1}\left(\nu_{0}\right)$ and $\rho_{1}\left(\nu_{0}\right)$ are given in (3.18) and (3.19) respectively. In the sequel, we assume $\varepsilon<\varepsilon_{2}$ and $v<\nu_{0}$. Hence,

$$
\begin{equation*}
\operatorname{dist}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}, \partial \Lambda_{i}\right)>\frac{d_{0}}{2}, \quad i=1, \ldots, k \quad \text { and } \quad \varepsilon \rho_{1}\left(\nu_{0}\right)<\frac{d_{0}}{K_{0}} . \tag{3.20}
\end{equation*}
$$

Define $\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}=\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{R_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)$ with $R_{n, \varepsilon}=e^{c \varepsilon n}$ and let $\tilde{n}>\hat{n}$ be integers such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
R_{\hat{n}-1, \varepsilon}<\frac{d_{0}}{K_{0}} \leqslant R_{\hat{n}, \varepsilon}, \quad R_{\tilde{n}+2, \varepsilon} \leqslant \frac{d_{0}}{2}<R_{\tilde{n}+3, \varepsilon} . \tag{3.21}
\end{equation*}
$$

By (3.20), one gets $R_{n, \varepsilon} \geqslant R_{\hat{n}, \varepsilon} \geqslant d_{0} / K_{0}>\varepsilon \rho_{1}\left(\nu_{0}\right)$ for $n \geqslant \hat{n}$, and hence

$$
\begin{equation*}
\Omega_{n, \varepsilon} \cap\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\varepsilon \rho_{1}\left(\nu_{0}\right)}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right)=\emptyset \tag{3.22}
\end{equation*}
$$

Let $\chi_{n, \varepsilon}(x)$ be smooth cut-off functions such that $\chi_{n, \varepsilon}(x)=0$ in $\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{R_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right), \chi_{n, \varepsilon}(x)=1$ in $\Omega_{n+1, \varepsilon}, 0 \leqslant$ $\chi_{n, \varepsilon} \leqslant 1$ and $\left|\nabla \chi_{n, \varepsilon}\right| \leqslant 2 /\left(R_{n+1, \varepsilon}-R_{n, \varepsilon}\right)$.

Lemma 3.6. Assume that $\left(H_{1}\right)$ and $\left(H_{2}\right)$ hold true. If $\hat{n} \leqslant n \leqslant \tilde{n}$, then

$$
\begin{equation*}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} A_{n, \varepsilon} \leqslant \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \tag{3.23}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $A_{n, \varepsilon}(x)=\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla\left(\chi_{n, \varepsilon} u_{\varepsilon}\right)\right|^{2}+V(x)\left(\chi_{n, \varepsilon} u_{\varepsilon}\right)^{2}$.
Proof. Calculating $\left\langle L_{\varepsilon}^{\prime}\left(u_{\varepsilon}\right), \chi_{n, \varepsilon}^{2} u_{\varepsilon}\right\rangle=0$ directly, one gets

$$
\begin{aligned}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} A_{n, \varepsilon} & =\int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}} \varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla \chi_{n, \varepsilon}\right|^{2} u_{\varepsilon}^{2}+\int_{\Lambda \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon}} \chi_{n, \varepsilon}^{2} K(x)\left(u_{\varepsilon}^{+}\right)^{p+1}+\int_{\left(\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda\right) \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon}} f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{\varepsilon}\right) \chi_{n, \varepsilon}^{2} u_{\varepsilon} \\
& :=I+I I+I I I .
\end{aligned}
$$

Observing that

$$
\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla \chi_{n, \varepsilon}\right|^{2} \leqslant \frac{4 \varepsilon^{2}}{\left|R_{n+1, \varepsilon}-R_{n, \varepsilon}\right|^{2}} \leqslant \frac{16}{c^{2} R_{n+1, \varepsilon}^{2}}
$$

and that, for $\hat{n} \leqslant n \leqslant \tilde{n}$ and $x \in\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{R_{n+1, \varepsilon}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right) \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{R_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right)$,

$$
\frac{128}{c^{2} R_{n+1, \varepsilon}^{2}} \leqslant \frac{128}{\frac{128 K_{0}^{2}}{d_{0}^{2} V_{1}} \cdot \frac{d_{0}^{2}}{K_{0}^{2}}}=V_{1} \leqslant V(x)
$$

we obtain

$$
\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla \chi_{n, \varepsilon}\right|^{2} \leqslant \frac{1}{8} V(x), \quad \text { in } \mathbb{R}^{N}
$$

and hence

$$
\begin{equation*}
I \leqslant \frac{1}{8} \int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) . \tag{3.24}
\end{equation*}
$$

Now, we estimate II.
Clearly, we only need to consider the case $\Lambda \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon} \neq \emptyset$. Similarly to (2.5), we obtain

$$
\begin{aligned}
\int_{\Lambda \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon}} K(x)\left(u_{\varepsilon}^{+}\right)^{p+1} & \leqslant \int_{\Lambda \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon}} K(x)\left|u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{p+1} \\
& \leqslant C_{1} \varepsilon^{-\frac{N(p-1)}{2}}\left(\int_{\Lambda \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)\right)^{\frac{p+1}{2}} .
\end{aligned}
$$

On the other hand, from (3.22), we see $\Lambda \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon} \subset \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\varepsilon \rho_{1}\left(v_{0}\right)}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right)$, for $n \geqslant \hat{n}$. Thus, it follows from (3.18) that

$$
\begin{align*}
I I & \leqslant C_{1} \varepsilon^{-\frac{N(p-1)}{2}}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\cup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\varepsilon \rho_{1}\left(v_{0}\right)}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right)}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)\right)^{\frac{p-1}{2}} \int_{\Lambda \cap \Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \\
& \leqslant C_{1} v_{0}^{\frac{p-1}{2}} \int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \\
& \leqslant \frac{1}{8} \int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) . \tag{3.25}
\end{align*}
$$

Finally, to estimate III, we only need to use the method for (2.6) and obtain

$$
\begin{equation*}
I I I \leqslant \int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}} \frac{\varepsilon^{3}}{1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}} u_{\varepsilon}^{2} \leqslant \frac{1}{8} \int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) . \tag{3.26}
\end{equation*}
$$

Consequently, (3.23) can be proved by combining (3.24)-(3.26).
Lemma 3.7. Under the assumptions of Lemma 3.6, for small $\varepsilon<\varepsilon_{2}$, one has

$$
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left|\nabla\left(\chi_{\tilde{n}, \varepsilon} u_{\varepsilon}\right)\right|^{2} \leqslant C \varepsilon^{N-2} 2^{-\frac{\ln 2}{c \varepsilon}} .
$$

Proof. Lemma 3.6 implies that

$$
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} A_{n, \varepsilon} \leqslant \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega_{n, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \leqslant \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} A_{n-1, \varepsilon} .
$$

Iterating the above process, we see

$$
\begin{aligned}
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} A_{\tilde{n}, \varepsilon} & \leqslant\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{\tilde{n}-\hat{n}} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} A_{\hat{n}, \varepsilon} \leqslant\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{\tilde{n}-\hat{n}+1} \int_{\Omega_{\hat{n}, \varepsilon}}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \\
& \leqslant\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{\tilde{n}-\hat{n}+1} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\cup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\left.\varepsilon \rho_{1}\left(v_{0}\right)\left(x x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right)}\right.}\left(\varepsilon^{2}\left|\nabla u_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right) \\
& \leqslant C \varepsilon^{N}\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{\tilde{n}-\hat{n}+1}=C \varepsilon^{N} e^{-(\tilde{n}-\hat{n}+1) \ln 2} \leqslant C \varepsilon^{N} 2^{-\frac{\ln 2}{c \varepsilon}},
\end{aligned}
$$

where, in the last inequality, we have used

$$
e^{c \varepsilon(\tilde{n}-\hat{n}+1)}=e^{c \varepsilon \tilde{n}} e^{-c \varepsilon(\hat{n}-1)}=e^{c \varepsilon \tilde{n}} R_{\hat{n}-1, \varepsilon}^{-1} \geqslant \frac{K_{0}}{d_{0}} \geqslant 2 .
$$

As a result, we obtain

$$
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left|\nabla\left(\chi_{\tilde{n}, \varepsilon} u_{\varepsilon}\right)\right|^{2} \leqslant \varepsilon^{-2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}} A_{\tilde{n}, \varepsilon} \leqslant C \varepsilon^{N-2} 2^{-\frac{\ln 2}{c \varepsilon}} .
$$

Lemma 3.8. Under the assumptions of Lemma 3.6, there holds

$$
u_{\varepsilon}(x) \leqslant C 2^{-\frac{\ln 2}{2 c \varepsilon}}, \quad \forall x \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\frac{d_{0}}{2}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right) .
$$

Proof. Define

$$
c_{\varepsilon}(x)=\chi_{\varepsilon}(x) K(\varepsilon x) v_{\varepsilon}^{p-1}+\left(1-\chi_{\varepsilon}(x)\right) \frac{\varepsilon^{3}}{1+|\varepsilon x|^{\theta_{0}}},
$$

where $\chi_{\varepsilon}$ is a characteristic function of $\Lambda^{\varepsilon}=\left\{\varepsilon^{-1} x \mid x \in \Lambda\right\}$. We know $v_{\varepsilon}=u_{\varepsilon}(\varepsilon x) \in H_{\mathrm{loc}}^{1}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ is a nonnegative weak subsolution of $\Delta v+c_{\varepsilon}(x) v=0$.

Fix $s \in\left(\frac{N}{2}, \frac{2 N}{(p-1)(N-2)}\right)$. Since $\theta_{0}>2$, we find

$$
\begin{aligned}
\left\|c_{\varepsilon}(x)\right\|_{L^{s}} & \leqslant\left\|\chi_{\varepsilon}(x) K(\varepsilon x) v_{\varepsilon}^{p-1}\right\|_{L^{s}}+\left\|\left(1-\chi_{\varepsilon}(x)\right) \frac{\varepsilon^{3}}{1+|\varepsilon x|^{\theta_{0}}}\right\|_{L^{s}} \\
& \leqslant C\left(\int_{\Lambda^{\varepsilon}}\left(\left|\nabla v_{\varepsilon}\right|^{2}+V(\varepsilon x) v_{\varepsilon}^{2}\right)\right)^{\frac{p-1}{2}}+C \varepsilon^{3-\frac{N}{s}}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} \frac{1}{\left(1+|y|^{\left.\theta_{0}\right)^{s}}\right.}\right)^{\frac{1}{s}} \leqslant C,
\end{aligned}
$$

which shows that $\left\|c_{\varepsilon}(x)\right\|_{L^{s}}$ is uniformly bounded with respect to $\varepsilon$. By Theorem 8.17 on page 194 in [25], there is a constant $C$ depending only on $d_{0}$, the dimension $N$ and the $L^{s}$ bound of $c_{\varepsilon}(x)$ such that for $z \in \mathbb{R}^{N}$,

$$
\begin{equation*}
v_{\varepsilon}(z) \leqslant C\left(\int_{B_{\frac{c d_{0}}{4}}^{4}(z)} v_{\varepsilon}^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{2 N}} \tag{3.27}
\end{equation*}
$$

Noting that for $\varepsilon$ small,

$$
B_{\frac{\varepsilon c d_{0}}{4}}(x) \subset \Omega_{\tilde{n}+1, \varepsilon}, \quad \forall x \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\frac{d_{0}}{2}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right),
$$

we see that, for any $x \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\frac{d_{0}}{2}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right)$,

$$
\begin{aligned}
u_{\varepsilon}(x) & =v_{\varepsilon}\left(\varepsilon^{-1} x\right) \leqslant C\left(\int_{B_{\frac{c d_{0}}{4}}\left(\varepsilon^{-1} x\right)} v_{\varepsilon}^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{2 N}} \\
& =C\left(\varepsilon^{-N} \int_{B_{\varepsilon c d_{0}}^{4}(x)} u_{\varepsilon}^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{2 N}} \leqslant C \varepsilon^{-\frac{N-2}{2}}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left(\chi_{\tilde{n}, \varepsilon} u_{\varepsilon}\right)^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{2 N}} \\
& \leqslant C \varepsilon^{-\frac{N-2}{2}}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left|\nabla\left(\chi_{\tilde{n}, \varepsilon} u_{\varepsilon}\right)\right|^{2}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \\
& \leqslant C 2^{-\frac{\ln 2}{2 c \varepsilon}} .
\end{aligned}
$$

Now we are ready to prove Theorem 1.1.

Proof. Since $p \in\left(\left(N+\beta_{1}\right) /(N-2),(N+2) /(N-2)\right)$, we can choose $\sigma_{0}$ less than but close to $N-2$ such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
2<\theta_{0}<(p-1) \sigma_{0}-\beta_{1}, \quad \sigma_{0} p-\beta_{1}>N . \tag{3.28}
\end{equation*}
$$

Define the following comparison function

$$
U(x)=\sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{1}{\mid x-x_{\varepsilon}^{i} \sigma_{0}} \quad \text { in } \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\frac{d_{0}}{2}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right) .
$$

It is easy to know that $Z(x)=U(x)-\varepsilon^{2} u_{\varepsilon}(x) \geqslant 0$ on $\partial\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} B_{\frac{d_{0}}{2}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)\right)$ for small $\varepsilon$ and $Z(x)$ vanishes at infinity due to (3.27).

On the other hand, noting $\sigma_{0}<N-2$, we conclude from Lemma 3.8 that for $\varepsilon$ sufficiently small and for all $x \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} \overline{B_{\frac{d_{0}}{2}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)}\right)$,

$$
\begin{aligned}
-\Delta Z & =-\Delta U+\varepsilon^{2} \Delta u_{\varepsilon} \\
& =\sigma_{0}\left(N-2-\sigma_{0}\right) \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{1}{\left|x-x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right|^{\sigma_{0}+2}}+V(x) u_{\varepsilon}-g_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{\varepsilon}\right) \\
& \geqslant \sigma_{0}\left(N-2-\sigma_{0}\right) \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{1}{\left|x-x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right|^{\sigma_{0}+2}}-\chi_{\Lambda}(x) \varepsilon-\frac{\varepsilon\left(1-\chi_{\Lambda}(x)\right)}{1+|x|^{N}}
\end{aligned}
$$

$$
\geqslant 0
$$

Thus, the maximum principle ensures that $u_{\varepsilon} \leqslant U / \varepsilon^{2}$ in $\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash\left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k} \overline{B_{\frac{d_{0}}{2}}\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right)}\right)$ and hence

$$
\begin{equation*}
u_{\varepsilon}(x) \leqslant \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{1}{\varepsilon^{2}\left|x-x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right|^{\sigma_{0}}} \leqslant \frac{C}{\varepsilon^{2}\left(1+|x|^{\sigma_{0}}\right)} \quad \text { in } \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda . \tag{3.29}
\end{equation*}
$$

Next we verify that $u_{\varepsilon}$ actually solves Eq. (1.1). Indeed, it follows from ( $H_{3}$ ), Lemma 3.8, (3.28) and (3.29) that we can choose $\gamma$ larger than but close to 1 such that, for small $\varepsilon$ and all $x \in \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda$,

$$
K(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{p} \leqslant k_{1}\left(1+|x|^{\beta_{1}}\right)\left(\frac{C}{\varepsilon^{2}\left(1+|x|^{\sigma_{0}}\right)}\right)^{p-\gamma} 2^{-\frac{(\gamma-1) \ln 2}{2 c \varepsilon}} u_{\varepsilon} \leqslant \frac{\varepsilon^{3}}{1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}} u_{\varepsilon},
$$

and

$$
K(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{p} \leqslant k_{1}\left(1+|x|^{\beta_{1}}\right)\left(\frac{C}{\varepsilon^{2}\left(1+|x|^{\sigma_{0}}\right)}\right)^{p+1-\gamma} 2^{-\frac{(\gamma-1) \ln 2}{2 c \varepsilon}} \leqslant \frac{\varepsilon}{1+|x|^{N}} .
$$

Therefore, $g_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{\varepsilon}\right) \equiv K(x) u_{\varepsilon}^{p}$ holds true in $\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda$ and $u_{\varepsilon}$ solves the original problem (1.1). Noting that $\sigma_{0}$ is close to $N-2$, (3.29) leads to $u_{\varepsilon} \in L^{2}\left(\mathbb{R}^{N}\right)$ for $N \geqslant 5$.

Finally, Proposition 3.1, Lemma 3.8 and (3.29) imply that $u_{\varepsilon}$ has exactly $k$ local maxima $x_{\varepsilon}^{i} \in \Lambda_{i}, i=1, \ldots, k$, which satisfy that $G\left(x_{\varepsilon}^{i}\right) \rightarrow \inf _{x \in \Lambda_{i}} G(x)$ as $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the referee for a very careful reading of the paper, for all his insightful comments and valuable suggestions. Both Deng and Peng were partially supported by the Key Project of NSFC (No. 10631030). Peng was also partially supported by the program from NCET (No. 07-0350) and self-determined research funds of CCNU from the colleges' basic research and operation of MOE (CCNU09C01007).

## Appendix A. The smoothness of $\boldsymbol{J}_{\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}}(\boldsymbol{u})$

Proposition A.1. Let $J_{\varepsilon}(u)$ be as in Section 2. Then $J_{\varepsilon}(u) \in C^{1}$.

Proof. Since $J_{\varepsilon}(u)=L_{\varepsilon}(u)+P_{\varepsilon}(u)$, we divide the proof into two steps.
Step 1. The functions $L_{\varepsilon}(u)$ is of class $C^{1}$.
We recall

$$
\begin{equation*}
f_{\varepsilon}(x, t)=\min \left\{K(x)\left(t^{+}\right)^{p}, \frac{\varepsilon^{3}}{1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}} t^{+}, \frac{\varepsilon}{1+|x|^{N}}\right\} . \tag{A.1}
\end{equation*}
$$

It is easy to check that $f_{\varepsilon}(x, t)$ is continuous in both $x$ and $t$. As a result, $F_{\varepsilon}(x, t)$ is $C^{1}$ in $t$.
We claim that $I(u):=\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} F_{\varepsilon}(x, u)$ is $C^{1}$. Indeed, it follows from direct calculation that, for any $h \in E_{\varepsilon}$

$$
\left.\frac{d}{d t} I(u+t h)\right|_{t=0}=\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}(x, u) h .
$$

Thus, $I(u)$ is Gateaux differentiable. To show that $I(u)$ is Fréchet differentiable and $I(u)$ is $C^{1}$, we just need to show that $\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} f_{\varepsilon}(x, u) h$ is continuous in $E_{\varepsilon}$.

Suppose that $u_{n} \rightarrow u$ in $E_{\varepsilon}$. We have

$$
\begin{align*}
\left|\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda}\left(f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right)-f_{\varepsilon}(x, u)\right) h\right| & \leqslant \int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda}\left|f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right)-f_{\varepsilon}(x, u)\right||h| \\
& \leqslant\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda}\left|f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right)-f_{\varepsilon}(x, u)\right|^{\frac{2 N}{N+2}}\right)^{\frac{N+2}{2 N}}\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda}|h|^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{2 N}} \\
& \leqslant C\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda}\left|f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right)-f_{\varepsilon}(x, u)\right|^{\frac{2 N}{N+2}}\right)^{\frac{N+2}{2 N}}\|h\|_{\varepsilon} . \tag{A.2}
\end{align*}
$$

Using (A.1), we see that for any set $S \subset \mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda$,

$$
\begin{aligned}
\int_{S}\left|f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right)\right|^{\frac{2 N}{N+2}} & \leqslant C \int_{S}\left(\frac{\left|u_{n}\right|}{1+|x|^{\theta_{0}}}\right)^{\frac{2 N}{N+2}} \leqslant\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N}}\left|u_{n}\right|^{\frac{2 N}{N-2}}\right)^{\frac{N-2}{N+2}}\left(\int_{S} \frac{1}{1+|x|^{\frac{N \theta_{0}}{2}}}\right)^{\frac{4}{N+2}} \\
& \leqslant C\left(\int_{S} \frac{1}{1+|x|^{\frac{N \theta_{0}}{2}}}\right)^{\frac{4}{N+2}}
\end{aligned}
$$

Since $\theta_{0}>2$, we see that if $\operatorname{meas}(S) \rightarrow 0$, or $S$ moves to infinity, then

$$
\int_{S}\left|f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right)\right|^{\frac{2 N}{N+2}} \rightarrow 0
$$

uniformly in $n$. It follows from the Vitalli theorem that

$$
\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda}\left|f_{\varepsilon}\left(x, u_{n}\right)-f_{\varepsilon}(x, u)\right|^{\frac{2 N}{N+2}} \rightarrow 0,
$$

as $n \rightarrow+\infty$. As a consequence, $\int_{\mathbb{R}^{N} \backslash \Lambda} F_{\varepsilon}(x, u)$ and hence $L_{\varepsilon}(u)$ are $C^{1}$.
Step 2. $P_{\varepsilon}(u)$ is $C^{1}$.
Recall

$$
P_{\varepsilon}(u)=M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+}^{2} .
$$

Direct calculations show that

$$
\left.\frac{d}{d t} P_{\varepsilon}(u+t h)\right|_{t=0}=M \sum_{i=1}^{k}\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+} \frac{\left\langle\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)\right)^{\prime}, h\right\rangle}{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}}
$$

Since $\left\{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}-\varepsilon^{\frac{N}{2}}\left(c_{i}+\sigma_{i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\right\}_{+} \frac{1}{\left(L_{\varepsilon}^{i}(u)_{+}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}}$ is continuous, we see that each term in functional $P_{\varepsilon}(u)$ is $C^{1}$. So, we complete the proof.

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