Riordan trees and the homotopy sl_2 weight system
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RIORDAN TREES AND THE HOMOTOPY $sl_2$ WEIGHT SYSTEM

JEAN-BAPTISTE MEILHAN AND SAKIE SUZUKI

Abstract. The purpose of this paper is twofold. On one hand, we introduce a modification of the dual canonical basis for invariant tensors of the 3-dimensional irreducible representation of $U_q(sl_2)$, given in terms of Jacobi diagrams, a central tool in quantum topology. On the other hand, we use this modified basis to study the so-called homotopy $sl_2$ weight system, which is its restriction to the space of Jacobi diagrams labeled by distinct integers. Noting that the $sl_2$ weight system is completely determined by its values on trees, we compute the image of the homotopy part on connected trees in all degrees; the kernel of this map is also discussed.

1. Introduction

The $sl_2$ weight system $W$ is a $\mathbb{Q}$-algebra homomorphism from the space $B(n)$ of Jacobi diagrams labeled by $\{1, \ldots, n\}$ to the algebra $\text{Inv}(S(sl_2)^{\otimes n})$ of invariant tensors of the symmetric algebra $S(sl_2)$. The relevance of this construction lies in low dimensional topology. Jacobi diagrams form the target space for the Kontsevich integral $Z$, which is universal among finite type and quantum invariants of knotted objects: in particular, by postcomposing $Z$ with the $sl_2$ weight system and specializing each factor at some finite-dimensional representation of quantum group $U_q(sl_2)$, one recovers the colored Jones polynomial. Hence, while the results of this paper are purely algebraic, we will see that they are motivated by, and have applications to, quantum topology – see Remark 1.4 at the end of this introduction.

An easy preliminary observation on the $sl_2$ weight system is the following.

Lemma 1.1. The $sl_2$ weight system is determined by its values on connected trees, i.e. connected and simply connected Jacobi diagrams.

(Although this result might be well-known, a proof is given in Section 1.4.)

In this paper, we focus on the homotopy part $B^h(n)$, which is generated by diagrams labeled by distinct elements in $\{1, \ldots, n\}$. Here, the terminology alludes to the link-homotopy relation on (string) links, which is generated by self crossing changes. It was shown by Habegger and Masbaum [4] that the restriction of the Kontsevich integral to $B^h(n)$ is a link-homotopy invariant, and is deeply related to Milnor link-homotopy invariants, which are classical invariants generalizing the linking number.

Let us state our main results on the homotopy $sl_2$ weight system, that is, the restriction of the $sl_2$ weight system to $B^h(n)$. Owing to Lemma 1.1, we can fully understand this map by studying the restrictions

$$W^h_n : C_n \to \text{Inv}(sl_2^{\otimes n})$$

of the $sl_2$ weight system to the space $C_n$ of connected trees with $n$ univalent vertices labeled by distinct elements in $\{1, \ldots, n\}$. Here, the target space $\text{Inv}(sl_2^{\otimes n})$ is the invariant part of the $n$-fold tensor power of the adjoint representation (the 3-dimensional irreducible representation) of $sl_2$. Recall that the dimension of $C_n$...
is given by \((n - 2)\)!, while the dimension of Inv\((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n})\) is known to be the so-called \([1]\) Riordan numbers \(R_n\) which can be defined by \(R_2 = R_3 = 1\) and \(R_n = (n - 1)(2R_{n-1} + 3R_{n-2})/(n + 1)\). These numbers are also found under the name of Motzkin sums, or ring numbers in the literature.

More generally, we have:

**Theorem 1.2.**

(i) The weight system map \(W^h_n\) is injective if and only if \(n \leq 5\).

(ii) For \(n\) odd and \(n = 2\), the weight system map \(W^h_n\) is surjective.

(iii) For \(n \geq 4\) even, \(W^h_n\) has a 1-dimensional cokernel, spanned by \(e \otimes e\), where \(e = \frac{1}{2} h \otimes h + e \otimes f + f \otimes e \in \text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes 2}))\).

The dimensions of \(C_n\), \(\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))\) and \(\text{Ker} W^h_n\) are given in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>(k)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(\dim C_n)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>5040</td>
<td>((k - 2)!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\dim \text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n})))</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>(R_k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\dim \text{Ker} W^h_n)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>4808</td>
<td>((k - 2)! - R_k + \frac{1+(-1)^n}{2})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** The dimensions of \(C_n\), \(\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))\) and \(\text{Ker} W^h_n\).

Let \(\mathfrak{S}_n\) be the symmetric group in \(n\) elements. The spaces \(C_n\) and \(\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))\) have \(\mathfrak{S}_n\)-module structures, such that \(\mathfrak{S}_n\) acts on \(C_n\) by permuting the labels, and acts on \(\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))\) by permuting the factors. The \(\mathfrak{sl}_2\) weight system is a \(\mathfrak{S}_n\)-module homomorphism, and the characters \(\chi_{C_n}\) and \(\chi_{\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))}\) are already known (see Lemma 3.7 and Proposition 5.8). Thus, by Theorem 1.2 we can determine the character \(\chi_{\text{ker}(W^h_n)}\) of the kernel of \(W^h_n\) as follows.

**Corollary 1.3.**

(i) For \(n = 2\) or \(n > 2\) odd, we have

\[
\chi_{\text{ker}(W^h_n)} = \chi_{C_n} - \chi_{\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))} \quad \text{and} \quad \chi_{\text{Im}(W^h_n)} = \chi_{\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))}.
\]

(ii) For \(n \geq 4\) even, we have

\[
\chi_{\text{ker}(W^h_n)} = \chi_{C_n} - \chi_{\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))} + \chi_U \quad \text{and} \quad \chi_{\text{Im}(W^h_n)} = \chi_{\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))} - \chi_U,
\]

where \(U\) is the trivial representation.

Although the proof of Theorem 1.2 is mainly combinatorial, it heavily relies on the following algebraic result.

**Theorem (Theorem 3.2).** The set

\[
\mathcal{I}_n := \{W(T) \mid T \text{ is a Riordan tree of order } n\}
\]

forms a basis for \(\text{Inv}((\mathfrak{sl}_2^{\otimes n}))\).

Here, Riordan trees of order \(n\) are a special class of elements of \(\mathcal{B}^h(n)\); roughly speaking, a Riordan tree is a disjoint union of linear tree diagrams (i.e. of the shape of Figure 2.2), whose label sets comprise a Riordan partition of \(\{1, \ldots, n\}\) — see Definition 4.1.

Theorem 3.2 is proved using the work of Frenkel and Khovanov [9], who studied graphical calculus for the dual canonical basis of tensor products of finite-dimensional irreducible representations of \(U_q(\mathfrak{sl}_2)\). More precisely, we define a new basis for \(\text{Inv}U_q(V_2^{\otimes n})\), the space of \(U_q(\mathfrak{sl}_2)\)-invariants of tensor products of the 3-dimensional irreducible representation \(V_2\), by inserting copies of the Jones-Wenzl projector in the dual canonical basis studied in [3]. This basis is actually unirtrangular to the Frenkel-Khovanov basis, see Theorem 4.3. The result is a graphical description of invariant tensors in terms of Jacobi diagrams; see e.g. [4, 9, 11] for
related graphical approaches to invariant tensors. We expect that this result and its possible generalizations could also be interesting from an algebraic point of view.

Remark 1.4. Consider the projection $Z^h$ of the Kontsevich integral $Z$ onto the space $B^{1,h}(n)$ of tree Jacobi diagrams labeled by distinct elements of $\{1, \ldots, n\}$. In Proposition 10.6 of [4], Habegger and Masbaum show that, for string links, the leading term of $Z^h$ determines (and is determined by) the first non-vanishing Milnor link-homotopy invariants. The non-injectivity of the map $W^h_n$ for $n \geq 5$ tells us that, expectedly, this is in general no longer the case for quantum invariant $W \circ Z$—yet, it is remarkable that it still determines the first non-vanishing Milnor link-homotopy invariants of length up to 5. On the other hand, since $Z$ extends to a graded isomorphism on the free abelian group generated by string links, surjectivity of the map $W^h_n$ readily implies surjectivity of the linear extension of $W^h_n \circ Z$ (see also Remark 3.3). By Theorem 1.2, the surjectivity defect is given by $c^\otimes n$; it is not hard to check that, for a $2n$-component string link, the coefficient of $c^\otimes n$ in $W \circ Z$ is given by a product of linking numbers (this follows from a similar result at the level of the Kontsevich integral $Z$), and is in particular zero for string links with vanishing linking numbers.

Similar observations can be made for the universal $sl_2$ invariant, using Theorem 5.5 of [8].

The rest of this paper is organized in three sections. In Section 2 we recall the definitions of Jacobi diagrams and the $sl_2$ weight system, and give a result which in particular implies Lemma 1.1. Section 3 introduces Riordan trees and the tree basis of $\text{Inv}(\sl_2 \otimes n)$, which are used to prove Theorem 1.2. Finally, in Section 4 we recall a few elements from the graphical calculus developed by Frenkel and Khovanov, and use it to prove Theorem 3.2.

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2. Jacobi diagrams and the $sl_2$ weight system

In this section we give the definitions of the $sl_2$ weight system $W$ and proof of Lemma 1.1.

2.1. The Lie algebra $sl_2$ and its symmetric algebra. Recall that the Lie algebra $sl_2$ is the 3-dimensional Lie algebra over $\mathbb{Q}$ generated by $h, e$, and $f$ with Lie bracket

$$[h, e] = 2e, \quad [h, f] = -2f, \quad [e, f] = h.$$ 

Let $S = S(sl_2)$ be the symmetric algebra of $sl_2$. The adjoint action, acting as a derivation, endows $S$, and more generally $S^\otimes n$ for any $n \geq 1$, with a structure of $sl_2$-modules. Note that $sl_2^\otimes n$, the $n$-fold tensor power of $sl_2$, is isomorphic to the subspace of $S^\otimes n$ having degree one in each factor.

We denote by $\text{Inv}(S^\otimes n)$ and $\text{Inv}(sl_2^\otimes n)$ the set of invariant tensors of $S^\otimes n$ and $sl_2^\otimes n$, respectively (that is, elements that are mapped to zero when acted on by $h, e$, and $f$).
2.2. Jacobi diagrams. A Jacobi diagram is a finite unitrivalent graph, such that each trivalent vertex is equipped with a cyclic ordering of its three incident half-edges. Each connected component is required to have at least one univalent vertex. An internal edge of a Jacobi diagram is an edge connecting two trivalent vertices. The degree of a Jacobi diagram is half its number of vertices.

In this paper we call a simply connected (not necessary connected) Jacobi diagram a tree. A tree consisting of a single edge is called a strut.

Let $B(n)$ be the completed $\mathbb{Q}$-space spanned by Jacobi diagrams whose univalent vertices are labeled by elements of $\{1, \ldots, n\}$, subject to the AS and IHX relations shown in Figure 2.1. Here completion is given by the degree. Note that $B(n)$ has an algebra structure with multiplication given by disjoint union.

Let $B^h(n) \subset B(n)$ denote the subspace generated by Jacobi diagrams labeled by distinct elements in $\{1, \ldots, n\}$. Note that $B^h(n)$ is the polynomial algebra on the space $C^h(n)$ of connected diagrams labeled by distinct elements in $\{1, \ldots, n\}$.

As is customary, for each of the spaces defined above we use a subscript $k$ to denote the corresponding subspaces spanned by degree $k$ elements.

We denote by $C_n$ the space of connected trees where each of the labels $1, \ldots, n$ appears exactly once. It is a well-known fact, easily checked using the AS and IHX relations, that a basis for $C_n$ is given by linear trees, i.e. connected trees of the form shown in Figure 2.2, where the labels $i_1$ and $i_n$ are two arbitrarily chosen elements of $\{1, \ldots, n\}$, and where $i_2, \ldots, i_{n-1}$ are running over all (pairwise distinct) elements of $\{1, \ldots, n\} \setminus \{i_1, i_n\}$. This shows that $\dim C_n = (n-2)!$, as recalled in the introduction.

2.3. The $\mathfrak{sl}_2$ weight system. We now define the $\mathfrak{sl}_2$ weight system, which is a $\mathbb{Q}$-algebra homomorphism

$$W: B(n) \to \text{Inv}(S^\otimes n).$$

Recalling that $B(n)$ is (the completion of) the commutative polynomial algebra on the space of connected diagrams, it is enough to define it on the latter. We closely follow [8, §4.3].

We will use the non-degenerate symmetric bilinear form

$$\kappa: \mathfrak{sl}_2 \otimes \mathfrak{sl}_2 \to \mathbb{Q}$$
given by

$$\kappa(h, h) = 2, \quad \kappa(e, f) = 1, \quad \kappa(h, e) = \kappa(h, f) = \kappa(e, e) = \kappa(f, f) = 0.$$

The superscript $h$ stands for ‘homotopy’ since, as noted in the introduction, $B^h(n)$ is the relevant space for link-homotopy invariants of (string) links.
Lemma 2.1. The get in this way an element where

\[(2.3)\]

by \(i\) corresponding to the relations. The next lemma, due to Chmutov and Varchenko [2], gives another relation satisfied by the \(sl_2\) where \(c\) as \(c\) of \(D\) edge of \(D\) while the Lie bracket \[(2.1)\]

\[W\]

identifies \(W\) to \(C\).

The bilinear form \(\kappa\) identifies \(sl_2\) with the dual Lie algebra \(sl_2^*\). Note that, under this identification, \(\kappa \in (sl_2^*)^* \simeq sl_2^* \otimes sl_2^*\) itself corresponds to the quadratic Casimir tensor

\[(2.1)\]

\[c = \frac{1}{2} h \otimes h + f \otimes e + e \otimes f \in \text{Inv}(sl_2^*)\]

while the Lie bracket \([-,-] \in sl_2^* \otimes sl_2^* \otimes sl_2\) corresponds to the invariant tensor

\[(2.2)\]

\[b = \sum_{\sigma \in \mathfrak{S}_n} (-1)^{|\sigma|} \sigma(h \otimes e \otimes f)\]

\[= h \otimes e \otimes f + e \otimes f \otimes h + f \otimes h \otimes e - h \otimes f \otimes e - f \otimes e \otimes h - e \otimes h \otimes f.\]

where \(\sigma\) acts by permutation of the factors.

Let \(D_{ij}\) be a strut with vertices labeled by \(1 \leq i,j \leq n\). Rewriting formally \(2.1\) as \(c = \sum c_1 \otimes c_2\), we set

\[
W(D_{ij}) = \sum 1 \otimes \cdots \otimes c_1 \otimes \cdots \otimes c_2 \otimes \cdots \otimes 1 \in \text{Inv}(S^{\otimes n}),
\]

where \(c_1\) and \(c_2\) are at the \(i\)th and \(j\)th position, respectively.

Now, let \(m \geq 2\). For a diagram connected diagram \(D \in B_m(n)\), attach a copy of \(b \in \text{Inv}(sl_2^*)\) to each trivalent vertex of \(D\), a copy of \(sl_2\) being associated to each of the \(3\) half-edges at the trivalent vertex following the cyclic ordering. Each internal edge of \(D\) is divided into half-edges, and we contract the two corresponding copies of \(sl_2\) by \(\kappa\). Fixing an arbitrary total order on the set of univalent vertices of \(D\), we get in this way an element \(x_D = \sum x_1 \otimes \cdots \otimes x_{m+1}\) of \(\text{Inv}(sl_2^{\otimes m+1})\), the \(i\)th factor corresponding to the \(i\)th univalent vertex of \(D\). We then define \(W(D) \in \text{Inv}(S^{\otimes n})\) by

\[(2.3)\]

\[W(D) = \sum y_1 \otimes \cdots \otimes y_n,\]

where \(y_j\) is the product of all \(x_i \in sl_2\) such that the \(i\)th vertex is labeled by \(j\).

It is known that \(W\) is well-defined, i.e. is invariant under the AS and IHX relations. The next lemma, due to Chmutov and Varchenko [2], gives another relation satisfied by the \(sl_2\) weight system.

**Lemma 2.1.** The \(sl_2\) weight system \(W\) factors through the CV relation below

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\
\cdot & 2 & \cdot \\
\cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
\text{CV} & & \\
\end{array}
\]

Note that the CV relation is not degree-preserving. Note also that this relation might involve diagrams with a circular component: the value of \(W\) on such component is set to \(W(\emptyset) = 3 = \dim sl_2\).

**Remark 2.2.** It is worth noting here that the restriction of the \(sl_2\) weight system to \(C\), takes values in \(\text{Inv}(sl_2^{\otimes n})\). Likewise, the homotopy \(sl_2\) weight system, i.e. its restriction to \(B^h(n)\), takes values in \(\text{Inv}((sl_2)^{\otimes n})\), where \((sl_2)^{\otimes n} = (Q \oplus sl_2)^{\otimes n} \subset S(sl_2)^{\otimes n}\) is the subspace of tensors having degree at most one in each factor.

**2.4. The space \(B_{sl_2}(n)\) of \(sl_2\)-Jacobi diagrams.** In view of Lemma 2.1 it is natural to consider the following space.

**Definition 2.3.** The space of \(sl_2\)-Jacobi diagrams is the quotient space

\[
B_{sl_2}(n) = B(n)/CV, \emptyset_3
\]

of \(B(n)\) by the ideal generated by the CV relation and the relation \(\emptyset_3\) that maps a circular component to a factor 3.
Note that the algebra structure on $B(n)$ descends to $B_{sl_2}(n)$. This is however no longer a graded algebra (although one could impose such a structure by considering the number of univalent vertices).

Since the $sl_2$ weight system factors through $B_{sl_2}(n)$, it is useful to for our study to get some insight in this space.

**Proposition 2.4.** As an algebra, $B_{sl_2}(n)$ is generated by (connected) trees.

This in particular implies Lemma 1.1 stated in the introduction.

**Proof.** It suffices to prove that any connected Jacobi diagram in $B_{sl_2}(n)$ can be expressed as a combination of trees. The proof is by a double induction, on the number of cycles in the diagrams and on the minimal length of the cycles (the length of a cycle is the number of internal edges contained in it).

Consider a connected diagram $C$ with $k$ cycles, and pick a cycle of minimal length $l$. If the cycle has length $l = 0$, then the diagram $C$ is a loop, which can be replaced by a coefficient 3 by the $\Tensor^3$ relation. If $l = 1$, then it follows from the AS relation that $C$ is zero. Now, if $l \geq 2$, we can apply the CV relation at some internal edge of the cycle, which gives

$$\begin{align*}
\ldots \ldots &= 2 \begin{array}{c}
\ldots \ldots \\
\uparrow \\
\end{array} \quad -2 \begin{array}{c}
\ldots \ldots \\
\uparrow \\
\end{array},
\end{align*}$$

where the rightmost term is a diagram with $n-1$ cycles, and where the middle term has a cycle of length $l-2$. We can thus apply (2.4) recursively to reduce the length of this cycle, until we obtain a cycle of length either 1 or 0, as above. Then $C$ writes as a combination of diagrams with less than $k$ cycles. This concludes the proof. $\square$

3. Invariant tensors and the homotopy $sl_2$ weight system

In this section we give a basis for $\text{Inv}(sl_2^\otimes n)$ in terms of Riordan trees, and use this basis to prove Theorem 1.2. The kernel of the homotopy $sl_2$ weight system is briefly discussed at the end of the section.

3.1. Tree basis of $\text{Inv}(sl_2^\otimes n)$. We now construct a basis for $\text{Inv}(sl_2^\otimes n)$, as the image by the $sl_2$ weight system of a certain class of connected tree Jacobi diagrams. For this, we need a couple extra definitions.

On one hand, we call a linear tree *ordered* if, in the notation of Figure 2.2, its labels $i_1, \ldots, i_n$ satisfy $i_1 < i_2 < \ldots < i_n$.

On the other hand, a *Riordan partition* is a partition of $\{1, \ldots, n\}$ into parts that contains at least two elements, and whose convex hulls are disjoint when the points are arranged on a circle. For example, $\{\{1, 4, 5, 9, 10\}, \{2, 3\}, \{6, 7, 8\}\}$ is a Riordan partition, as illustrated in Figure 3.1, while $\{\{1, 4, 6\}, \{2, 3\}, \{5, 7, 8\}\}$ is not. The number of Riordan partitions of $\{1, \ldots, n\}$ is given by the Riordan number $R_n$ — see [1] §3.2.

This leads to the following

**Definition 3.1.** A *Riordan tree* of order $n$ is an element of $B^h(n)$ such that

- each connected component is an ordered linear tree,
- the partition of $\{1, \ldots, n\}$ induced by its connected components is a Riordan partition.

\[A partition satisfying only the second condition is often called non-crossing.\]
Lemma 3.4. The following two lemmas.

(i) If \( T \in B^h(n) \), then \( W(T) \in W(C_n) \). In particular, \( J^h_n \subset W(C_n) \).

For \( n \geq 2 \) even, let \( U^\otimes n = \bigcup_{i=1}^{n/2} D_{2i-1,2i} \) denote the tree diagram made of \( n \) struts labeled by \( i \) and \( i+1 \) \((1 \leq i \leq n/2)\). Note that \( W(U^\otimes n) = c^\otimes n \in J^U_n \).

Lemma 3.5. (i) We have \( W(U^\otimes n) \not\equiv 0 \) modulo \( W(C_n) \).

(ii) If \( T \in B^h_n \) with \( n \geq 4 \) even, then \( W(T) \equiv W(U^\otimes n) \) modulo \( W(C_n) \).

Proof of Lemma 3.4 Let \( T \in B^h(n) \), containing at least one trivalent vertex, and let \( k \) denote the number of connected components of \( T \). If \( k > 1 \), the equality

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{k} \sum_{j=1}^{k} \sum_{m=1}^{\min(i,j)} c_{ij}^m = c^\otimes k
\]

where \( c_{ij}^m \) are the coefficients of the canonical basis for \( \text{Inv}(B^h(n)) \).

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{k} \sum_{j=1}^{k} \sum_{m=1}^{\min(i,j)} c_{ij}^m = c^\otimes k
\]

Figure 3.1. The Riordan tree associated to the Riordan partition \( \{1, 4, 5, 9, 10\}, \{2, 3\}, \{6, 7, 8\} \).
depicted in Figure 3.2 shows how \( T \) can be expressed as a combination of tree diagrams with \( k - 1 \) components in \( B_{sl^2}(n) \). Since each of these trees contains at least one trivalent vertex, the proof follows by an easy induction on \( k \).

Remark 3.6. Note that the proof applies more generally to the whole space \( B_{sl^2}(n) \). More precisely, any Jacobi diagram with at least one trivalent vertex decomposes as a combination of connected diagrams in \( B_{sl^2}(n) \). Combining this with Proposition 2.4, we have that \( B_{sl^2}(2k + 1) \) is generated, as a vector space, by connected tree diagrams and the disjoint union of \( n \) struts \( \bigcup_{i=1}^{k} D_{2i-1,2i} \).

Proof of Lemma 3.5. To show (ii), note that any \( T \in B_{sl^2}(n) \) is obtained from \( \bigcup_n \) by exchanging some labels, which implies that \( W(T) - W(\bigcup_n) \in W(B_Y(n)) \) by Lemma 2.1. Combining this with Lemma 3.4, we have the assertion. We now prove (i). Consider the \( \mathbb{C} \)-linear map \( \phi: \text{Inv}(sl^2 \otimes n) \to \mathbb{C} \) defined (using Theorem 3.2) by

\[
\phi(t) = \begin{cases} 
0 & \text{for } t \in \mathcal{C}_n, \\
1 & \text{for } t \in \mathcal{T}_n.
\end{cases}
\]

We prove that \( W(\mathcal{C}_n) \subset \text{Ker}(\phi) \), which implies the assertion. It suffices to prove that \( W(T) \in \text{Ker}(\phi) \) for a connected tree diagram \( T \in C_n \); actually, as observed at the end of Section 2.2 we may further assume that \( T \) is linear. Notice that the number \( v_T \) of trivalent vertices of \( T \) is its degree minus 1, and that applying the CV relation yields diagrams with \( (v_T - 2) \) trivalent vertices. If the degree of \( T \) is odd, then by applying the CV relation repeatedly we obtain

\[
T = 2^{v_T/2} \sum_{i=1}^{2^{v_T/2}} (-1)^i U_i,
\]

where \( U_i \in B_Y(n) \). Although this expression is not unique, this always yields \( \phi(T) = 0 \). Now, in the case where \( T \) has even degree, successive applications of the CV relation give

\[
T = 2^{(v_T-1)/2} \sum_{i=1}^{2^{(v_T-1)/2}} (-1)^i Y_i,
\]

where \( Y_i \) has a single trivalent vertex (and \( \frac{v_T-1}{2} = \frac{n}{2} - 1 \) struts). We thus obtain \( \phi(T) = 0 \), as desired.

3.3. \( \mathcal{S}_n \)-module structure. For a partition \( \lambda \) of \( n \), let \( V_\lambda \) denote the irreducible representation of \( \mathcal{S}_n \) associated to \( \lambda \). Note that the adjoint representation of \( sl_2 \) corresponds to the vector representation \( V \) of \( SO(3) \), and the invariant part of \( sl_2 \otimes n \) corresponds to the invariant part of \( \mathcal{S}_n \). The tensor powers of the vector representation of \( GL(3) \) and its restriction to \( SO(3) \) are well-studied classically, using e.g. Schur-Weyl duality or Peter-Weyl Theorem. In particular, we have the following.

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\( 3 \)This extra assumption is not necessary for the proof, but makes the arguments simpler to verify.
Lemma 3.7. As $\mathfrak{S}_n$-modules, we have

$$\text{Inv}(sl^2_{\mathbb{Z}}) \simeq \bigoplus V_\lambda,$$

where the summation is over partitions $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \lambda_3)$ of $n$ such that each $\lambda_i$ is odd or each $\lambda_i$ is even, i.e., such that $\lambda_1 - \lambda_2, \lambda_2 - \lambda_3 \in 2\mathbb{Z}$.

Corollary 1.3 follows from Theorem 1.2 and Lemma 3.7 as follows.

**Proof of Corollary 1.3.** The fact that $\chi_{\ker(W^h_n)} = \chi_{C_n} - \chi_{\text{Inv}(sl^2_{\mathbb{Z}})}$ and $\chi_{\text{Im}(W^h_n)} = \chi_{\text{Inv}(sl^2_{\mathbb{Z}})}$ for $n = 2$ or $n > 2$ odd immediately follows from Theorem 1.2. By Lemma 3.7 the one dimensional representation appearing in the irreducible decomposition of $\text{Inv}(sl^2_{\mathbb{Z}})$ is the trivial representation $U$. Thus we have that $\chi_{\ker(W^h_n)} = \chi_{C_n} - \chi_{\text{Inv}(sl^2_{\mathbb{Z}})} + \chi_U$ and $\chi_{\text{Im}(W^h_n)} = \chi_{\text{Inv}(sl^2_{\mathbb{Z}})} - \chi_U$ for $n \geq 4$ even. $\square$

The character $\chi_{C_n}$ is known as follows.

**Proposition 3.8** (Kontsevich [6, Theorem 3.2]). As a $\mathfrak{S}_n$-module, the character of $C_n$ is

$$\chi_{C_n}(1^n) = (n-2)!,$$ $\chi_{C_n}(1^n a^b) = (b-1)a^{b-1}\mu(a),$ $\chi_{C_n}(a^b) = -(b-1)a^{b-1}\mu(a),$ and $\chi_{C_n}(\ast) = 0$ for other conjugacy classes. Here, $\mu$ is the Möbius function.

Thus by Corollary 1.3 we can calculate the character $\chi_{\ker(W^h_n)}$ explicitly. See Figure 3.3 for the low degree cases.

![Figure 3.3. Irreducible decompositions of $C_n$, $2 \leq n \leq 8$, as $\mathfrak{S}_n$-modules. The red components are in the kernel of $W^h_n$.](image)

**3.4. Generating the kernel.** It follows from Theorem 1.2 that the dimension of the kernel of the weight system map $W^h$ is given by $k! - R_k + \frac{1 + (-1)^k}{2}$. In this short section, we investigate some typical elements of this kernel. More precisely, we consider 1-loop relators of degree $k$, which are linear combinations of elements of $C_{k+1}$ of the form

$$L_1 - L_2 - R_1 + R_2,$$

where $L_1, L_2, R_1, R_2$ are degree $k$ tree Jacobi diagrams as shown in Figure 3.4.
Let us explain why these are indeed mapped to zero by $W_k$. Denote by $O$ the element of $B_{k+1}^h(k+1)$ represented in Figure 3.4. We call such an element a 2-forked wheel. Now, by applying the CV relation at the internal edge $l$ of $O$ (see the figure), we have that

$$W_k(O) = 2W_k(L_1) - 2W_k(L_2),$$

while applying CV at internal edge $r$ yields

$$W_k(O) = 2W_k(R_1) - 2W_k(R_2),$$

thus showing that $L_1 - L_2 - R_1 + R_2$ is in the kernel of $W_k$.

Notice that, in degree $\leq 5$, all 1-loop relators are trivial, which agrees with the fact that the weight system map is injective. Computations performed using a code in Scilab allowed us to check that, up to degree $k = 8$, the kernel of the weight system map $W_k$ is generated by 1-loop relators of degree $k$.

It would be interesting to see up to what degree this statement still holds, and what are the additional kernel elements when it doesn’t.

4. THE DUAL CANONICAL BASIS AND THE $sl_2$ WEIGHT SYSTEM

In this section, we review the graphical calculus used by Frenkel and Khovanov in [3] to describe tensor products of finite-dimensional irreducible representations of quantum group $U_q(sl_2)$. This graphical calculus for invariant tensors appeared originally in the work of Rumer, Teller and Weyl [10], and was later adapted to the quantum setting in [3].

More precisely, we first recall in Section 4.1 some basic facts on $U_q(sl_2)$ and its representations, in Section 4.2 we recall the graphical calculus for the dual canonical basis for invariant tensors of 3-dimensional irreducible representations of $sl_2$, and in Section 4.3 we show that a simple modification of this basis is well-behaved with respect to the universal $sl_2$ weight system.

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The authors are indebted to Raphaël Rossignon for writing this code.
4.1. Quantum group \( U_q(\mathfrak{sl}_2) \) and finite-dimensional irreducible representations. Let \( U_q = U_q(\mathfrak{sl}_2) \) be the algebra over \( \mathbb{C}(q) \) with generators \( K, K^{-1}, E, F \) and relations
\[
KK^{-1} = K^{-1}K = 1, \quad KE = q^2EK, \quad KF = q^{-2}FK, \quad EF - FE = \frac{K - K^{-1}}{q - q^{-1}},
\]
for \( q \) a non-zero complex indeterminate.

For \( n \geq 0 \), denote by \( V_n \) the fundamental \((n+1)\)-dimensional irreducible representation of \( U_q \), with basis
\[
\{v_i ; -n \leq i \leq n, \ i = n \pmod{2}\}
\]
such that the action of \( U_q \) is given by
\[
Ev_i = \left[\frac{n + i + 2}{2}\right] v_{i+2}, \quad Fv_i = \left[\frac{n - i + 2}{2}\right] v_{i-2}, \quad K^\pm v_i = q^\pm v_i
\]
where \([m] = (q^m - q^{-m})/(q - q^{-1})\) and \( v_{n+2} = v_{-n-2} = 0 \).

Let \( \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle : V_n \otimes V_n \rightarrow \mathbb{C}(q) \) be the symmetric bilinear pairing defined by
\[
\langle v_{n-2k}, v_{n-2l} \rangle = \frac{[n]!}{[k]![n-k]!} \delta_{k,l}; \ 0 \leq k, l \leq n,
\]
where \([k] := \prod_{i<k}[i]\), and let \( \{v^i ; -n \leq i \leq n, \ i = n \pmod{2}\} \) be the dual basis with respect to this pairing. In particular, for \( n = 1 \), the dual basis is simply given by \( v^1 = v_i \) (\( i = \pm 1 \)), while for \( n = 2 \), we have \( v^1 = v_1, v^2 = \frac{1}{2}v_0 \) and \( v^{-2} = v_{-2} \).

We also define the bilinear pairing \( \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle \) of \( V_{n_1} \otimes \ldots \otimes V_{n_m} \) and \((V_{n_1} \otimes \ldots \otimes V_{n_m})^* = V_{n_m} \otimes \ldots \otimes V_{n_1}\)
\[
\langle v_{k_1} \otimes \ldots \otimes v_{k_m}, v'^{k_1} \otimes \ldots \otimes v'^{k_i}\rangle = \prod_{i=1}^{m} \delta_{k_i,k'_i}.
\]

We refer the reader to Chapters 2 and 3 of the book [5] for a much more detailed treatment of this subject.

4.2. Graphical representations of the dual canonical basis for invariants \( V \). In what follows, we will only deal with 1 and 2-dimensional representations, which is sufficient for the purpose of this paper. We thus only give a very partial overview of the work in [3], where we refer the reader for further reading. We will mostly follow the notation of [3].

Let \( \delta_1 : \mathbb{C} \rightarrow V_1 \otimes V_1 \) denote the map defined by
\[
\delta_1(1) = v^1 \otimes v^1 - q^{-1}v^{-1} \otimes v^1.
\]

In [3, Thm. 1.9], Frenkel and Khovanov showed that the intersection of the dual canonical basis of \( V_{1} \otimes^{2m} \) and the space \( \text{Inv}_{U_q}(V_{1} \otimes^{2m}) \) of invariant tensors forms a basis of \( \text{Inv}_{U_q}(V_{1} \otimes^{2m}) \):
\[
\{(\delta_1)^{2(m-1)}_1 \delta_1^{2(m-2)} \delta_1^{2(m-3)} \ldots \delta_1^2 \delta_1(1) ; 0 \leq i_j \leq j \text{ for each index } 1 \leq j \leq m - 1\},
\]
where \((\delta_1)^{k}_{l} : V_{1} \otimes^{k} \rightarrow V_{1} \otimes^{k+2}\) is defined by \((\delta_1)^{k}_{l} = 1^\otimes_{l} \otimes \delta_1 \otimes 1^{\otimes(k-l)} (0 \leq l \leq k)\).

Graphically, \( V_{1} \otimes^{2m} \) is represented by \(2m\) fixed points on the \(x\)-axis of the real plane, and an element of the dual canonical basis of \( \text{Inv}_{U_q}(V_{1} \otimes^{2m}) \) is represented by a union of \( m \) non-intersecting arcs embedded in the lower half-plane and connecting these points, each arc corresponding to a copy of the map \( \delta_1 \). For example, the dual

---

5 The action of \( U_q \) on tensor powers of irreducible representations is defined via the comultiplication map \( \Delta \) in the Hopf algebra structure of \( U_q \); the dual action with respect to \( \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle \) is likewise given by \( u(x \otimes y) = \Delta(u)(x \otimes y) \), where \( \Delta(u) = (\sigma \otimes \sigma)\Delta(\sigma(u)) \) with the bar involution \( \sigma : U_q \rightarrow U_q \). See e.g. [4] Chap. 3 or [3] § 1 for the details.
canonical basis of \( \text{Inv}_{U_n}(V_1^{\otimes 4}) \) consists of two elements \((\delta_1)_0^1(\delta_1)_1^1\) and \((\delta_1)_0^2(\delta_1)_1^2\), which are represented by the two diagrams \( D_1 \) and \( D_2 \) in Figure 4.1 respectively.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Figure 4.1. FK diagrams representing the dual canonical basis of } \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_1^{\otimes 2}).
\end{align*}
\]

Now, it follows from [3, Thm. 1.11] that these basis elements induce a basis \( B_m^0 \) for \( \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_2^{\otimes m}) \), by taking their image under \( \pi_2^m \), where \( \pi_2: V_1 \otimes V_1 \to V_2 \) is defined by

\[
\begin{align*}
\pi_2(v^1 \otimes v^1) &= v^2, & \pi_2(v^1 \otimes v^{-1}) &= q^{-1}v^0, \\
\pi_2(v^1 \otimes v^{-1}) &= q^{-1}v^{-1}, & \pi_2(v^{-1} \otimes v^1) &= v^0.
\end{align*}
\]

The map \( \pi_2 \) is graphically represented by a box with two incident points (corresponding to the two copies of \( V_1 \) on its lower horizontal edge, see Figure 4.2.

Since \( \pi_2 \circ \delta_1 = 0 \), a diagram containing a box whose incident points are connected by an arc is equal to zero. If there is no such box, then this defines a non-trivial element of \( \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_2^{\otimes m}) \).

In summary, an element of the dual canonical basis \( B_m^0 \) of \( \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_2^{\otimes m}) \) is graphically incarnated by \( m \) horizontally aligned boxes, whose incident edges are connected by \( m \) non-intersecting arcs, such that each arc is incident to two distinct boxes.

**Remark 4.1.** Arranging the \( n \) boxes on a circle, FK diagrams for elements of \( B_m^0 \) naturally appear to be in one-to-one correspondence with (convex hulls of) Riordan partitions of \( \{1, \ldots, n\} \). This agrees with the fact that the dimension of \( \text{Inv}(V_2^{\otimes m}) \) is given by the Riordan number \( R_m \).

**Example 4.2.** We conclude with a couple of examples. For \( m = 2 \), \( \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_2^{\otimes 2}) \) is spanned by \( D_c \) in Figure 4.2 which represents the element

\[
\begin{align*}
\tilde{c} := (\pi_2 \otimes \pi_2)(\delta_1)_0^1(\delta_1)_1^1 &= (\pi_2 \otimes \pi_2)(v^1 \otimes v^1 \otimes v^{-1} \otimes v^{-1} - q^{-1}v^{-1} \otimes v^1 \otimes v^{-1} \otimes v^1 \\
&\quad -q^{-1}v^1 \otimes v^{-1} \otimes v^1 \otimes v^{-1} + q^{-2}v^{-1} \otimes v^{-1} \otimes v^1 \otimes v^1) \\
&= v^2 \otimes v^{-2} - (q^{-1} + q^{-3})v^0 \otimes v^0 + q^{-2}v^{-2} \otimes v^2.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Figure 4.2. FK diagrams representing the dual canonical bases for } \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_2^{\otimes 2}) \text{ and } \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_2^{\otimes 3}).
\end{align*}
\]

Similarly, \( \text{Inv}_{U_2}(V_2^{\otimes 3}) \) has dimension 1 with basis given by the diagram \( D_b \) represented in Figure 4.2. We leave it to the reader to verify that this diagram represents the element

\[
\begin{align*}
\tilde{b} := v^2 \otimes v^0 \otimes v^{-2} + q^{-2}v^0 \otimes v^{-2} \otimes v^2 + q^{-2}v^{-2} \otimes v^2 \otimes v^0 + q^{-5}v^0 \otimes v^0 \otimes v^0 \\
- q^{-2}v^2 \otimes v^{-2} \otimes v^0 - q^{-2}v^0 \otimes v^2 \otimes v^{-2} - q^{-2}v^{-2} \otimes v^0 \otimes v^2 - q^{-1}v^0 \otimes v^0 \otimes v^0.
\end{align*}
\]
In the rest of this paper, we will use the term FK diagrams to refer to this graphical calculus of Frenkel and Khovanov, and we will consider such diagrams up to planar isotopy (fixing only the $m$ boundary boxes corresponding to the $m$ copies of $V_2$ in $\text{Inv}(V_2^\otimes m)$). We will also often blur the distinction between an invariant tensor and the FK diagram representing it.

4.3. The tree basis of $\text{Inv}_{U_q}(V_2^\otimes n)$. In this section, we modify the dual canonical basis $B_0^m$ of $\text{Inv}_{U_q}(V_2^\otimes n)$ recalled above and prove that, at $q = 1$, this new basis corresponds to the tree basis of $\text{Inv}(sl_2^\otimes n)$ defined in Section 3.1.

The only new ingredient is the Jones-Wenzl projector $p_2: V_1 \otimes V_1 \to V_1 \otimes V_1$ defined by

\[
p_2(v^1 \otimes v^1) = v^1 \otimes v^1, \quad p_2(v^1 \otimes v^{-1}) = \frac{1}{2} \left( q^{-1}v^1 \otimes v^{-1} + v^{-1} \otimes v^1 \right),
\]

\[
p_2(v^{-1} \otimes v^{-1}) = v^{-1} \otimes v^{-1}, \quad p_2(v^{-1} \otimes v^1) = \frac{1}{2} \left( v^1 \otimes v^{-1} + qv^{-1} \otimes v^1 \right).
\]

See Figure 4.3 for a graphical definition.

\[
\text{Figure 4.3. The Jones-Wenzl projector } p_2 : V_1 \otimes V_1 \to V_1 \otimes V_1.
\]

Let $T$ be a Riordan tree of order $n$. We now define two elements $f^0(T)$ and $f(T)$ of $\text{Inv}_{U_q}(V_2^\otimes n)$ using the graphical calculus introduced in the previous section. Consider a proper embedding $i(T)$ of $T$ in the lower-half plane, such that the $j$-labeled vertex is sent to the point $(j; 0)$ and such that the cyclic ordering at each trivalent vertex agrees with the orientation of the plane. An example is given in Figure 4.4. Note that the Riordan property ensures that such an embedding exists.

\[
i(T)
\]

\[
\text{Figure 4.4. The embedding } i(T) \text{ for the Riordan partition } \{\{1, 2, 6, 7, 8\}; \{3, 4, 5\}\right).
\]

We first describe the diagram defining $f^0(T) \in \text{Inv}_{U_q}(V_2^\otimes n)$. First, replace each point $(j; 0)$ by a box representing a copy of $V_2$ ($1 \leq j \leq n$). Next, consider an annular neighborhood of $i(T)$ in the lower-half plane; the boundary of this neighborhood is a collection of disjoint arcs connecting the $n$ boxes, thus providing an FK diagram for $f^0(T)$. See Figure 4.5. Note that we have the following reformulation

\[
f^0(T)\quad f(T)
\]

\[
\text{Figure 4.5. The FK diagrams for } f^0(T) \text{ and } f(T), \text{ for the Riordan partition } \{\{1, 2, 6, 7, 8\}; \{3, 4, 5\}\right).
for the dual canonical basis of Frenkel–Khovanov:
\[ \mathfrak{B}_n := \{ f^0(T) : f \text{ is a Riordan tree of order } n \}. \]

Now, to obtain the diagram defining \( f(T) \) we simply insert a copy of the Jones-Wenzl projector \( p_2 \) in the pairs of arcs of \( f^0(T) \) induced by each internal edge of \( T \) in the above procedure - see the example of Figure 4.5.

We have

**Theorem 4.3.** The set
\[ \mathfrak{B}_n^{JW} := \{ f(T) : f \text{ is a Riordan tree of order } n \} \]
forms a basis for \( \text{Inv}_{U_n}(V_2^\otimes n) \).

**Proof.** Since there is a natural one-to-one correspondence between the set \( \mathfrak{B}_n^{JW} \) and the basis \( \mathfrak{B}_n \), it is enough to prove the independency of the elements in \( \mathfrak{B}_n^{JW} \).

So suppose that
\[ \sum_{T \in \text{Rio}_n} \alpha_T f(T) = 0, \]
where the sum runs over the set \( \text{Rio}_n \) of Riordan trees of order \( n \), and where \( \alpha_T \in \mathbb{C} \). Using the formula for the Jones-Wenzl projector given by Figure 4.5, one can express each \( f(T) \) as a linear combination
\[ f(T) = f^0(T) + \sum_{T' \subseteq T} \frac{1}{2^{i_T - i_{T'}}} f^0(T'), \]
where the sum runs over all subtrees \( T' \) obtained from \( T \) by deleting internal edges, and where \( i_T \) denotes the number of internal edges of a Riordan tree \( t \in \text{Rio}_n \). By substituting this identity in \( \sum_{T \in \text{Rio}_n} \alpha_T f(T) = 0 \), we have that there exists complex numbers \( \alpha_T' \in \mathbb{C} \) such that \( \sum_{f \in \text{Rio}_n} \alpha_T' f^0(T) = 0 \), and a lower triangular matrix \( A \) whose diagonal entries are all 1 such that \( (\alpha_{T_1}', \ldots, \alpha_{T_l}')^t = A(\alpha_{T_1}, \ldots, \alpha_{T_l})^t \) for a suitably chosen order \( \{ T_1, \ldots, T_l \} \) on \( \text{Rio}_n \). Since \( \mathfrak{B}_n^{JW} \) is a basis of \( \text{Inv}_{U_n}(V_2^\otimes n) \), we have \( (\alpha_{T_1}', \ldots, \alpha_{T_l}') = 0 \), which implies that \( \alpha_T = 0 \) for all \( T \in \text{Rio}_n \). This concludes the proof.

It turns out that this simple modification of the dual canonical basis of \( \text{Inv}_{U_n}(V_2^\otimes n) \) is directly related to the tree basis introduced in Section 3.1 as we now explain.

Let \( \rho : \text{Inv}_{U_n}(V_2^\otimes n) \to \text{Inv}(s_2^\otimes n) \) be the \( \mathbb{C} \)-linear map such that
\[ \rho(q) = 1, \quad \rho(v^0) = \frac{1}{2} h, \quad \rho(v^2) = -e, \quad \rho(v^{-2}) = f. \]

**Proposition 4.4.** Let \( T \) be a Riordan tree. If \( \text{deg}(T) \) and \( \text{tri}(T) \) denote the degree and number of trivalent vertices of \( T \) respectively, then we have
\[ \rho(f(T)) = \frac{(-1)^{\text{deg}(T)}}{2^{\text{tri}(T)}} W(T). \]

It follows immediately that the tree basis of Section 3.1 indeed is a basis for \( \text{Inv}(s_2^\otimes n) \), as claimed in Theorem 3.2.

**Proof.** The assertion follows essentially from the definitions. To see this, let us slightly reformulate the definition of \( f(T) \), still in terms of FK diagrams but in a spirit that is closer to that of \( W(T) \). For each strut component of \( s(T) \), pick a copy of the diagram \( D_c \) of Figure 1.2 and take a copy of the diagram \( D_h \) for each trivalent vertex so that a copy of \( V_2 \) is associated to each of the incident half-edges.
following the cyclic ordering. For each internal edge of \( i(T) \), we contract the two corresponding copies of \( V_2 \) by the map \( \varepsilon_2 : V_2 \otimes V_2 \to \mathbb{C} \) defined by

\[
\varepsilon_2(v^2 \otimes v^{-2}) = q^2, \quad \varepsilon_2(v^0 \otimes v^0) = -\frac{1}{q-1 + q^{-3}}, \\
\varepsilon_2(v^{-2} \otimes v^1) = 1, \quad \varepsilon_2(v^1 \otimes v^j) = 0, \quad \text{if } i + j \neq 0.
\]

As observed in [3], we have the identity

\[
\varepsilon_2 \circ (\pi_2 \otimes \pi_2) = \varepsilon_1 \circ (1 \otimes \varepsilon_1 \otimes 1) \circ (p_2 \otimes p_2),
\]

where \( \varepsilon_1 : V_1 \otimes V_1 \to V_0 \) is defined by

\[
\varepsilon_1(v^1 \otimes v^{-1}) = -q ; \quad \varepsilon_1(v^{-1} \otimes v^1) = 1 ; \quad \varepsilon_1(v^1 \otimes v^1) = \varepsilon_1(v^{-1} \otimes v^{-1}) = 0.
\]

This formula, as illustrated in Figure 4.6 below, simply means that the map \( \varepsilon_2 \) is the insertion of a copy of \( p_2 \) at each internal edge. (Recall that \( p_2 \) is a projector, i.e. \( p_2 \circ p_2 = p_2 \).)

\[\varepsilon_2 = \begin{array}{c}
\text{Figure 4.6. Graphical definition of the contraction map } \varepsilon_2.
\end{array}\]

So applying \( \varepsilon_2 \) in this way yields precisely the FK diagram for \( f(T) \), where the box corresponding to the \( i \)-labeled vertex represents the \( i \)th copy of \( V_2 \). This is illustrated on an example in Figure 4.7

\[\varepsilon_2 \begin{array}{c}
\text{Figure 4.7. Reformulating } f(T), \text{ for the Riordan partition }
\{\{1, 2, 6, 7, 8\}; \{3, 4, 5\}\}. \\
\end{array}\]

Now, it remains to observe that the elements \( \tilde{c} \) and \( \tilde{b} \), defined in Example 4.2 and represented by the diagrams \( D_c \) and \( D_b \) respectively, correspond to the elements \( c \) and \( b \) of Equations (2.1) and (2.2) via the map \( \rho \) as follows:

\[
(4.1) \quad \rho(\tilde{c}) = -c \\
(4.2) \quad \rho(\tilde{b}) = \frac{1}{2}b,
\]

and that the contraction maps \( \kappa \) and \( \varepsilon_2 \), used in the definitions of \( W(T) \) and \( f(T) \) respectively, are related by

\[
(4.3) \quad (\varepsilon_2)_{q=1} = -\kappa \circ \rho.
\]

Notice in particular that the \( \frac{1}{2^{\text{deg}(T)}} \) coefficient in the statement comes from the application of (4.2) at each trivalent vertex, while the sign \( (-1)^{\text{deg}(T)} \) is given by applying (4.1) at each strut component (which has degree 1), and (4.3) at each internal edge (since the degree of a linear tree is the number of internal edges plus 2). This concludes the proof. \( \square \)
References


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