

## AN UMBRAL CALCULUS FOR POLYNOMIALS CHARACTERIZING $U(n)$ TENSOR PRODUCTS

BY

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This talk reports on work to appear in [1] that has been done jointly with L.C. BIEDENHARN and R.A. GUSTAFSON.

In this lecture we continue the study of the connection between the invariant polynomials

$$(1) \quad \begin{aligned} \mu G_q^{(n)} &\equiv \mu G_q^{(n)}((x_{ij} + \Delta_1)) \\ &\equiv \mu G_q^{(n)}(\Delta_1, \dots, \Delta_n; x_{12}, x_{23}, \dots, x_{n-1,n}, x_{n,1}). \end{aligned}$$

characterizing  $U(n)$  tensor operators  $\langle p, q, \dots, q, 0, \dots, 0 \rangle$ , and the classical theory of symmetric functions as presented in [9], that was established in [5]. The polynomial  $\mu G_q^{(n)}(X)$  arise naturally in the application of symmetry groups to mathematical physics. One such problem, with applications to spectroscopy at all levels, is the construction of a suitable basis for the set of all bounded operators mapping the set of all unitary irreducible representation spaces of the group into itself. The precise problems that give rise to  $\mu G_q^{(n)}(X)$  are motivated in more detail and put into a broader mathematical setting in [2-4].

The above irrep label  $\langle p, q, \dots, q, 0, \dots, 0 \rangle$  consists of one  $p$ ,  $\mu$   $q$ 's, and  $n - \mu - 1$  0's. Furthermore,  $q$  determines  $p$  since  $\Delta_1 + \dots + \Delta_n = p + \mu q$  and we are given  $q$ ,  $\Delta_1 + \dots + \Delta_n$  and  $\mu$ .

Recently in [5-7] an alternate method for explicitly writing down  $\mu G_q^{(n)}(X)$  in polynomial form has been given. These methods provide a direct connection between the classical theory of symmetric functions as presented in [9], and the symmetries satisfied by a family of  $U(n)$  invariant polynomials even more general than  $\mu G_q^{(n)}(X)$ . In [5] it is shown that after the change of variables

$$(2) \quad \Delta_i = \gamma_i - \delta_i \quad x_{i,i+1} = \delta_i - \delta_{i+1},$$

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${}_{\mu}G_q^{(n)}(\Delta_i, ;, x_{i,i+1}, )$  becomes an integral linear combination of products of Schur functions  $S_{\alpha}(\gamma_i) \cdot S_{\beta}(\delta_i)$  in the variables  $\{\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n\}$  and  $\{\delta_1, \dots, \delta_n\}$ , respectively. (See equation (6) for a definition of  $S_{\lambda}(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ .) That is, it is directly proved that  ${}_{\mu}G_q^{(n)}(\Delta_i, ;, x_{i,i+1}, )$  is a bisymmetric polynomial in the variables  $\{\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n\}$  and  $\{\delta_1, \dots, \delta_n\}$  with integer coefficients. This motivated the study in [5] of the yet more general bisymmetric polynomials

$$(3) \quad {}_m G_q^{(n)}(\gamma; \delta) \equiv {}_{\mu} G_q^{(n)}(\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n; \delta_1, \dots, \delta_m)$$

which are a common generalization of (2.2b) of [2] and equation (2.17) of [10] with no numerator parameters. These polynomials are given by

*Definition 4.* — Given that  ${}_{\mu}G_0^{(n)}(\gamma; \delta) \equiv 1$ , we uniquely determine  ${}_{\mu}G_q^{(n)}(\gamma; \delta)$  by means of

$$(5) \quad {}_m G_q^{(n)}(\gamma_i, ;, \delta_i, ) = \sum_{\substack{S \subset I_n \\ \|S\| = \mu + 1}} (-1)^{\mu + 1 + \Sigma(S)} \prod_{\substack{i < j \\ i \in S, j \in S^c}} (\gamma_i - \gamma_j)^{-1} \\ \times \prod_{\substack{i < j \\ i \in S^c, j \in S}} (\gamma_i - \gamma_j)^{-1} \prod_{\substack{i=1 \\ i \in S}}^n \prod_{l=1}^m (\gamma_i - \delta_l) \cdot {}_m G_{q-1}^{(n)}(\gamma_i - \chi(i \in S), ;, \delta_i, ),$$

where  $S \subset I_n$  is a  $(\mu + 1)$ -element subset of  $\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$ ,  $\Sigma(S)$  denotes the sum of the elements in  $S$ , and  $\chi(A)$  is 1 if statement  $A$  is true and 0, otherwise.

At this point we need to review some basic facts about the Schur functions  $S_{\lambda}$ . Let  $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_r, \dots)$  be a *partition*, i.e., a (finite or infinite) sequence of nonnegative integers in decreasing order,  $\lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_r \dots$  such that only finitely many of the  $\lambda_i$  are nonzero. The number of nonzero  $\lambda_i$ , denoted by  $l(\lambda)$ , is called the *length* of  $\lambda$ . If  $\sum \lambda_i = n$ , then  $\lambda$  is called a *partition of weight  $n$* , denoted by  $|\lambda| = n$ . Given a partition  $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n)$  of length  $\leq n$ , the Schur functions  $S_{\lambda}$  are defined by

$$(6) \quad S_{\lambda}(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \frac{\det(x_i^{\lambda_j + n - j})_{1 \leq i, j \leq n}}{\det(x_i^{n - j})_{1 \leq i, j \leq n}}.$$

The determinant in the numerator of (6) is divisible in  $\mathbf{Z}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$  by each of the differences  $(x_i - x_j)$ ,  $1 \leq i < j \leq n$ , and hence by their product, which is the *Vandermonde determinant*

$$(7a) \quad \prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq n} (x_i - x_j) = \det(x_i^{n - j})_{1 \leq i, j \leq n}$$

$$(7b) \quad \equiv V_n(x_1, \dots, x_n).$$

Thus, the quotient in (6) is a symmetric polynomial in  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  with coefficient in  $\mathbf{Z}$ . For example,  $S_{(n)} = h_n$  and  $S_{(1^n)} = e_n$  where  $h_n$  and  $e_n$  are, respectively, the homogeneous and elementary symmetric functions of  $x_1, \dots, x_n$ .

If  $Z = m_1 + \dots + m_n$ , with  $m_i$  monomials, then

$$(8) \quad S_\lambda(Z) \equiv S_\lambda(m_1 + \dots + m_n) \equiv S_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_n) \Big|_{x_i = m_i}.$$

On the other hand,  $S_\lambda(-(Z))$  is defined symbolically by

$$(9) \quad S_\lambda(-(Z)) \equiv S_\lambda(-(m_1 + \dots + m_n)) \equiv (-1)^{|\lambda|} S_{\lambda'}(Z),$$

where  $|\mu| = \lambda_1 + \dots + \lambda_n$  is the sum of the parts of  $\lambda$  and  $\lambda'$  is the conjugate partition to  $\lambda$ . That is,  $\lambda' = (\lambda'_1, \lambda'_2, \dots, \lambda'_{(\lambda_1)})$ , with  $\lambda'_i = \|\{j \mid \lambda_j \geq i\}\|$ . For example  $(5, 2, 1)$  is the conjugate partition of  $(3, 2, 1, 1, 1)$ . Note that  $S_\lambda(-(m_1 + \dots + m_n))$  is *not* equal to  $S_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_n)|_{x_i = -m_i}$ . The definitions given by (8) and (9) are implicit in [9; see Remark (3.10) of p. 26].

If  $\rho = (\rho_1, \dots, \rho_k)$ , where  $\rho_i$  are integers, then denote by  $(X)^\rho$  the monomial  $x_1^{\rho_1} \dots x_k^{\rho_k}$  where  $X = \{x_1, \dots, x_k\}$ . Let the permutations  $w \in S_k$  act on subscripts. For example,  $w(X)^\rho = x_{w(1)}^{\rho_1} \dots x_{w(k)}^{\rho_k}$ . Finally, let  $\delta_k$  be the partition  $(k-1, k-2, \dots, 0)$  and  $m^l$  the partition consisting of  $l$  parts equal to  $m$ .

Fix  $\mu$  and assume that  $m - n \equiv \nu$  is a constant. Denote the sets of variables  $\{\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_{\mu+1}\}$ ,  $\{\gamma_{\mu+2}, \dots, \gamma_n\}$ ,  $\{\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n\}$ , and  $\{\delta_1, \dots, \delta_m\}$  by  $A$ ,  $B$ ,  $E$  and  $F$ , respectively. We then have from [5] the following fundamental

THEOREM 10. — *Let  ${}^m_\mu G_q^{(n)}(E; F)$  be defined as in (5). We then have*

$$(11) \quad {}^m_\mu G_q^{(n)}(E; F) = \frac{(-1)^{\binom{\mu+1}{2}}}{V_n(E)} \sum_{\substack{\lambda=(\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{\mu+1}) \\ \lambda_1 \leq m}} S_\lambda(-F) \\ \cdot \left\{ \sum_{w \in S_n} \epsilon(w) \cdot w \left[ (A)^{m^{\mu+1} + \delta_{\mu+1} - (\lambda_{\mu+1}, \dots, \lambda_1)} (B)^{\delta_{n-(\mu+1)}} \right. \right. \\ \left. \left. \cdot {}^m_\mu G_{q-1}^{(n)}(\gamma_1 - 1, \dots, \gamma_{\mu+1} - 1, B; F) \right] \right\},$$

where, without loss of generalitly,  $w$  acts only on  $\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_{\mu+1}$  when applied to  ${}^m_\mu G_{q-1}^{(n)}$ , and  $\epsilon(w)$  is the sign of the permutation  $w$ .

Starting with (11) and making direct use of the new symmetries discovered in [5], it is shown in [1] that the bisymmetric polynomials  ${}^m_\mu G_q^{(n)}(E; F)$  are an integral linear combination of Schur functions  $S_\lambda(E - F)$  in the symbol  $E - F$ , where  $E - F$  denotes the difference of the two sets of variables  $E$  and  $F$ . Making use of properties of skew Schur functions  $S_{\lambda/\mu}$  and  $S_\lambda(E - F)$  one puts together an umbral calculus for  ${}^m_\mu G_q^{(n)}(E; F)$ . That is, working entirely with polynomials, one uniquely determines  ${}^m_\mu G_q^{(n)}$  from  ${}^m_\mu G_{q-1}^{(n)}$  and combinatorial rules (such as the Littlewood-Richardson rule [9]) involving Ferrers diagrams (i.e. partitions). The deepest part of this umbral calculus is a summation theorem, involving many different aspects of the theory of Schur functions, which essentially reduces the double sum in (11) to the single term in which  $\lambda$  is the empty partition and  $w$  is the identity permutation. Here, we recall a general theorem from [1] which illustrates how the structure of  ${}^m_\mu G_q^{(n)}(E; F)$  “stabilizes” as  $\nu$  increases while  $m - n = \nu$  remains fixed, state the umbral calculus for  ${}^m_\mu G_q^{(n)}(E; F)$ , and just give the final formulas for  ${}^m_\mu G_1^{(n)}(E; F)$  and  ${}^m_\mu G_2^{(n)}(E; F)$  which are a direct consequence of the umbral calculus and work in [5].

Before giving these formulas we need some more notation. Let  $\lambda, \rho$  be partitions. The skew Schur function  $S_{\lambda/\rho}$  is defined by

$$(12) \quad S_{\lambda/\rho}(E) = \sum_{\nu \subset \lambda} c_{\rho\nu}^\lambda \cdot S_\nu(E),$$

where  $\nu \subset \lambda$  means  $\nu_i \leq \lambda_i$  for all  $i \geq 1$ , and the integers  $c_{\rho\nu}^\lambda$  are the Littlewood-Richardson rule coefficients determined by

$$(13) \quad S_\rho(E) \cdot S_\nu(E) = \sum_{\lambda} c_{\rho\nu}^\lambda S_\lambda(E).$$

Note that  $S_{\lambda/0} = S_\lambda$ , where 0 denotes the zero partition. Also,  $c_{\rho\nu}^\lambda = 0$  unless  $|\lambda| = |\rho| + |\nu|$ , so that  $S_{\lambda/\rho}$  is homogeneous of degree  $|\lambda| - |\rho|$ , and is zero if  $|\lambda| < |\rho|$ . In fact,  $S_{\lambda/\rho} = 0$  unless  $\rho \subset \lambda$ .

Given the sets of variables  $E$  and  $F$ , let  $E + F$  be the set union  $\{\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n, \delta_1, \dots, \delta_m\}$ . There is then the following classical result

$$(14) \quad S_\lambda(E + F) = \sum_{\rho \subset \lambda} S_{\lambda/\rho}(E) S_\rho(F).$$

It is immediate from (9) and (14) that

$$(15a) \quad S_\lambda(E - F) = \sum_{\rho \subset \lambda} S_{\rho/\lambda}(E) S_\rho(-F)$$

$$(15b) \quad = \sum_{\rho \subset \lambda} (-1)^{|\rho|} S_{\rho/\lambda}(E) \cdot S_{\rho'}(F),$$

where  $\rho'$  is the conjugate partition to  $\rho$ . The above classical formulas can be found in Chapter I of [9].

We now state a fundamental result of [1].

**THEOREM 16.** — *Fix  $\mu \geq 0$  and  $k = m - n$ . There are integers  $a_{\lambda,q}$ ,  $\lambda$  a partition,  $q$  a non-negative integer such that*

$$(17) \quad {}^m G_q^{(n)}(E; F) = \sum_{\lambda} a_{\lambda,q} S_{\lambda}(E - F),$$

where  $|\lambda| \leq (\mu + 1)(\mu + 1 + k)q$  and  $\lambda \subset [(\mu + 1 + k)q]^{(\mu+1)q}$ .

If  $n \geq (\mu + 1)q$  and  $m \geq (\mu + 1 + k)q$ , then  $a_{\lambda,q}$  is independent of  $n$ . More generally, if  $S_{\lambda}(E - F) \neq 0$ , then  $a_{\lambda,q}$  is independent of  $n$ .

A similar “stabilization” theorem involving  $S_{\alpha}(E) \cdot S_{\beta}(F)$  instead of  $S_{\lambda}(E - F)$  was proved in [5]. Just as in [5] it follows from (17) that the  $n = (\mu + 1)q$  and  $m = (\mu + 1 + m - n)q$  case of (17) gives the correct formula for  ${}^{m+l} G_q^{(n+l)}(E; F)$  for all integers  $l$ , when the sets  $E$  and  $F$  contain  $(n + l)$  and  $(m + l)$  variables, respectively.

Before stating the umbral calculus for  ${}^m G_q^{(n)}(E; F)$  we need :

**Definition 18.** — Let  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  be the three partitions  $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \dots, \alpha_n)$ ,  $\beta = (\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_n)$ ,  $\gamma = (\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \dots, \gamma_m)$ . The sum  $\alpha + \beta$  and direct sum  $\alpha \oplus \gamma$  are defined by

$$(19a) \quad \alpha + \beta = (\alpha_1 + \beta_1, \alpha_2 + \beta_2, \dots, \alpha_n + \beta_n)$$

and

$$(19b) \quad \alpha \oplus \gamma = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \dots, \alpha_n, \gamma_1, \gamma_2, \dots, \gamma_m).$$

Note that  $\alpha + \beta$  is a partition while  $\alpha \oplus \gamma$  may not be. In general  $\alpha \oplus \gamma$  is just a  $(n + m)$ -tuple.

**Definition 20.** — Let  $\phi \equiv (\phi_1, \phi_2, \dots, \phi_n)$  be an  $n$ -tuple of non-negative integers that is not necessarily a partition. If all the coordinates of  $(\phi + \delta_n) = (\phi_1 + n - 1, \phi_2 + n - 2, \dots, \phi_{n-1} + 1, \phi_n)$  are distinct, then there is a unique permutation  $\sigma_{\phi} \in \mathcal{S}_n$  that orders the parts of  $(\phi + \delta_n)$  in decreasing order. Denote the resulting partition (with distinct parts) by  $\sigma_{\phi}(\phi + \delta_n)$ . In addition, let  $(\phi)_{\sigma_{\phi}}$  be the partition

$$(21) \quad (\phi)_{\sigma_{\phi}} \equiv \sigma_{\phi}(\phi + \delta_n) - \delta_n.$$

Now, given any  $n$ -tuple  $\phi = (\phi_1, \phi_2, \dots, \phi_n)$ , we determine  $S_{\phi}(E - F)$  by means of

$$(22a) \quad S_{\phi}(E - F), \quad \text{if the parts of } (\phi + \delta_n) \text{ are not distinct.}$$

Otherwise,

$$(22b) \quad S_\phi(E - F) = \epsilon(\sigma_\phi) \cdot S_{(\phi)\sigma_\phi}(E - F),$$

where  $(\phi)\sigma_\phi$  is the partition given by (21) and  $\epsilon(\sigma_\phi)$  is the sign of the permutation  $\sigma_\phi$ . (Note that if  $\phi$  is a partition, then the parts of  $(\phi + \delta_n)$  are distinct,  $\delta_\phi$  is the identity permutation, and the right-side of (22b) is simply  $(S_\phi(E - F))$ .)

THEOREM 23. — *One has*

$$(24) \quad S_\lambda(X + Y) = \sum_{\pi, \alpha \subset \lambda} c_{\pi\alpha}^\lambda S_\alpha(Y) S_\pi(X),$$

where  $c_{\pi\alpha}^\lambda$  are the L–R coefficients in (13), and  $X$  and  $Y$  are two (signed) sums of monomials.

THEOREM 25 (A. Lascoux). — *One has*

$$(26) \quad S_\pi(-1 + \gamma_1, \dots, -1 + \gamma_{\mu+1}) = \sum_{\nu \subset \pi} d_{\pi\nu} S_\nu(A),$$

where

$$(27) \quad d_{\pi\nu} = (-1)^{|\pi| - |\nu|} \det \left[ \begin{pmatrix} \pi_i + \mu + 1 - i \\ \nu_j + \mu + 1 - j \end{pmatrix} \right]_{1 \leq i, j \leq \mu+1},$$

and

$$A = \{\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \dots, \gamma_{\mu+1}\}.$$

THEOREM 23 appears in [9; see eq. (5.9) on p. 41] and THEOREM 25 is due to A. LASCoux [8] and can be found in [9; see ex. 10, p. 30].

The first step of the umbral calculus is to compute

$$(28) \quad {}_\mu^m G_{q-1}^{(n)}(\gamma_1 - 1, \gamma_2 - 1, \dots, \gamma_{\mu+1} - 1, B; F).$$

This is accomplished by means of the  $q - 1$  case of THEOREM 16, and THEOREMS 23 and 25. The second (and deepest) part of the umbral calculus is to replace  $S_\nu(A) \cdot S_\alpha(B - F)$  in the sum giving (28) by

$$(29) \quad S_{(((\mu+1+m-n)^{\mu+1+\nu}) \oplus \alpha)}(E - F).$$

where (29) is determined by the  $\phi = (((\mu + 1 + m - n)^{\mu+1 + \nu}) \oplus \alpha)$  case of Definition 20. The resulting sum is equal to  ${}_\mu^m G_q^{(n)}(E; F)$ . That is, we have

THEOREM 30 (umbral calculus). — Let  ${}^m G_{q-1}^{(n)}(E; F)$  be given by the  $q - 1$  case of (17). For technical reasons assume that the following inequalities hold :  $(\mu + 1)q \leq n$ ,  $m \geq \mu + 1$ ,  $m - n = k$  is constant,  $l(\nu) \leq \mu + 1$ , and  $l(\alpha) \leq n - (\mu + 1)$ . We then have

$$(31) \quad {}^m G_q^{(n)}(E; F) = (-1)^{\binom{\mu+1}{2}} \sum_{\lambda} a_{\lambda, q-1} \cdot \left\{ \sum_{\substack{\pi, \alpha \subset \lambda \\ \nu \subset \pi}} c_{\pi\alpha}^{\lambda} \cdot d_{\pi\nu} \cdot S_{((\mu+1+m-n)\mu+1+\nu) \oplus \alpha}(E - F) \right\},$$

where  $|\lambda| \leq (\mu + 1)(\mu + 1 + k)(q - 1)$  and  $\lambda \subset [(\mu + 1 + k)(q - 1)]^{(\mu+1)(q-1)}$  and where  $S_{((\mu+1+m-n)\mu+1+\nu) \oplus \alpha}(E - F)$  is determined by the  $\phi = ((\mu + 1 + m - n)\mu + 1 + \nu) \oplus \alpha$  case of Definition 20,  $c_{\pi\alpha}^{\lambda}$  are the L-R coefficients in (13), and the  $d_{\pi\nu}$  are defined by (27).

THEOREM 1.22 of [5] expressed  ${}^m G_1^{(n)}(E; F)$  as a sum of products of Schur functions  $S_{\alpha}(F) \cdot S_{\beta}(F)$ . Using (15b) to rewrite this sum immediately gives

$$(32) \quad {}^m G_1^{(n)}(E; F) = (-1)^{\binom{\mu+1}{2}} S_{(\mu+1+m-n)\mu+1}(E - F),$$

where  $(\mu + 1 + m - n)\mu + 1$  denotes the partition consisting of  $(\mu + 1)$  parts equal to  $(\mu + 1 + m - n)$ .

In [5] it took three pages to write  ${}^2_1 G_2^{(n)}(E; F)$  as a sum of products of Schur functions. Starting with (32) and making use of THEOREM 30 it was shown in [1] that

$$(33) \quad {}^2_1 G_2^{(n)}(E; F) = \{S_{2^2}(D)\}^2 + \{-[2S_{4,3}(D) + 2S_{2^3,1}(D) + 3S_{3,2^2}(D) + 3S_{3^2,1}(D) + S_{4,3,1}(D) + S_{3,2,1^2}(D)] + [S_{4,2}(D) + S_{2^2,1^2}(D) + 3S_{2^3}(D) + 3S_{3^2}(D) + 3S_{3,2,1}(D)] + [2S_{3,2}(D) + 2S_{2^2,1}(D)] + S_{2^2}(D)\},$$

where  $D$  denotes the set difference  $E - F$ .

Further applications of THEOREMS 16 and 30, as well as detailed proofs, can be found in [1].

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