

Supersymmetry lecture notes

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Lecture 1.1

Lecture 1.2

Maybe these will be filled in at some point

Lecture 2.1 (Super) Lie algebras

Last time:

Tried to write super versions of various mathematical objects that are physically relevant. In particular: super vector spaces, super Hilbert space, super algebras and super commutator. Let us recall the definition of the supercommutator:

$$[A, B] = AB - (-)^{\sigma_A \sigma_B} BA \quad (0.1)$$

with $\sigma = 0$ for bosons and $\sigma = 1$ for fermions and $(-)^{\sigma_A \sigma_B}$ is the Koszul sign. The super commutator then satisfies the super Jacobi identity:

$$(-)^{\sigma_A \sigma_C} [[A, B], C] + (-)^{\sigma_A \sigma_B} [[B, C], A] + (-)^{\sigma_C \sigma_B} [[C, A], B] = 0 \quad (0.2)$$

This time:

1 The (super) Jacobi identity for (super) Lie algebras

First of all, why is the Jacobi identity important? Very often it happens that we have the concept of a bracket but we don't have a product, this structure is called a Lie algebra. It's important to note in fact that Lie algebras are not algebras.

Example. $\mathfrak{sl}(2)$: it's three dimensional, we can think of it as spanned by the Pauli matrices. We have $[L_x, L_y] = L_z$ and cyclic permutations of that. (written like this it's a real Lie algebra so I can represent it by real matrices)

Classically $\vec{L} = \vec{r} \times \vec{p}$, so (considering p as the generator of translations) we have

$$L_x = y \frac{\partial}{\partial z} - z \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \quad (1.1)$$

$$L_y = z \frac{\partial}{\partial x} - x \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \quad (1.2)$$

$$L_z = x \frac{\partial}{\partial y} - y \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \quad (1.3)$$

The commutator tells us something about rotations in space: the difference between doing first a rotation A through one axis and then another B through another axis, or doing B and then A is just a rotation through the third axis.

Let's calculate it explicitly:

$$L_x L_y = \left(y \frac{\partial}{\partial z} - z \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \right) \left(z \frac{\partial}{\partial x} - x \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \right) \quad (1.4)$$

$$= y \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + yz \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x \partial z} - z^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y \partial x} - yx \frac{\partial^2}{\partial z^2} + zx \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y \partial z} \quad (1.5)$$

$$L_y L_x = x \frac{\partial}{\partial y} + yz \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x \partial z} - z^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y \partial x} - yx \frac{\partial^2}{\partial z^2} + zx \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y \partial z} \quad (1.6)$$

so if i just apply one after the other I get something quite complicated, but taking the commutator

$$[L_x, L_y] = y \frac{\partial}{\partial x} - x \frac{\partial}{\partial y} = L_z \quad (1.7)$$

I get another rotation. This means that they're not an algebra but they're a Lie algebra. Actually this works more generally for vector fields: their product is not a vector field, but their commutator is again a vector field.

So more abstractly I don't have a commutator but I have a bracket and it's important to make sure that it satisfies the Jacobi identity.

Definition 1. A super Lie algebra is a super vector space \mathfrak{g} with a bracket operation $[\cdot, \cdot] : \mathfrak{g} \otimes \mathfrak{g} \rightarrow \mathfrak{g}$ that:

1. preserves parity
2. is super antisymmetric
3. satisfies the super Jacobi identity

(i.e. exactly like a Lie algebra but with everything super and parity preservation) Let's unpack that a bit. First of all, let $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{g}_0 \oplus \mathfrak{g}_1$ and note that the bracket is actually three different maps:

$$\mathfrak{g}_0 \otimes \mathfrak{g}_0 \rightarrow \mathfrak{g}_0 \quad (1.8)$$

$$\mathfrak{g}_0 \otimes \mathfrak{g}_1 \rightarrow \mathfrak{g}_1 \quad (1.9)$$

$$\mathfrak{g}_1 \otimes \mathfrak{g}_1 \rightarrow \mathfrak{g}_0 \quad (1.10)$$

Now for the let's consider the different cases of the super Jacobi identity:

1. $+++$: \mathfrak{g}_0 is a normal Lie algebra
2. $++-$: $g, h \in \mathfrak{g}_0, \psi \in \mathfrak{g}_1$, so the super Jacobi is:

$$[[g, h], \psi] + [[h, \psi], g] + [[\psi, g], h] = 0 \quad (1.11)$$

or equivalently:

$$[[g, h], \psi] = [g, [h, \psi]] - [h, [g, \psi]] \quad (1.12)$$

i have two bosonic symmetries and I'm considering their action on the fermionic symmetries: on the right I'm considering the action of g and h on ψ taken in different orders and subtracting the two, on the left I'm saying that that is equal to the action of $[g, h]$ on ψ .

Essentially this is saying that we have a representation of \mathfrak{g}_0 over \mathfrak{g}_1 (see appendix A.2): we have the map $\rho_{\mathfrak{g}_1} : \mathfrak{g}_0 \rightarrow \text{End}(\mathfrak{g}_1)$ given by $g \mapsto [g, \cdot]$ and it's supposed to satisfy

$$\rho_{[g,h]}(\psi) = \rho_g(\rho_h\psi) - \rho_h(\rho_g\psi) \quad (1.13)$$

in order to be a Lie algebra homomorphism. But this equality is exactly the one above.

3. $+-$: $g \in \mathfrak{g}_0, \psi, \xi \in \mathfrak{g}_1$, so we have

$$[[\psi, \xi], g] - [[\xi, g], \psi] + [[g, \psi], \xi] = 0 \quad (1.14)$$

or also

$$[g, [\psi, \xi]] = [\psi, [\xi, g]] + [[g, \psi], \xi] \quad (1.15)$$

The bracket of fermions is compatible with the \mathfrak{g}_0 symmetry, so we're essentially in the situation of the representation of the tensor product $\mathfrak{g}_1 \otimes \mathfrak{g}_1$ and this relation is what we wrote for the representation of the tensor product.

4. $---$: $\psi, \xi, \lambda \in \mathfrak{g}_1$, so we have

$$[[\psi, \xi], \lambda] + [[\xi, \lambda], \psi] + [[\lambda, \psi], \xi] = 0 \quad (1.16)$$

equivalently:

$$[[\psi, \psi], \psi] = 0, \quad \forall \psi \in \mathfrak{g}_1 \quad (1.17)$$

which would be trivial for bosons since already the commutator gives 0. Instead here $[\psi, \psi]$ is in general nontrivial, however it shouldn't act nontrivially on the fermion itself. Or said differently "no fermionic symmetry can only generate one bosonic symmetry but not more than that", or "a fermionic symmetry commutes with its own square".

Recipe: take a Lie algebra \mathfrak{g}_0 , take a representation and call it \mathfrak{g}_1 and check that every symmetry commutes with its own square.

2 Four ways of looking at $\mathfrak{gl}(1,1)$

In general given V a vector space, $\mathfrak{gl}(V)$ = linear maps $V \rightarrow V$ = matrices acting in V . So $\mathfrak{gl}(n) = \mathfrak{gl}(\mathbb{C}^n)$ or $\mathfrak{gl}(\mathbb{R}^n)$. So then $\mathfrak{gl}(n|m) = \mathfrak{gl}(C^{n|m})$ with n dimensional even part and m dimensional odd.

Take matrices:

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad E = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad F = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad R = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (2.1)$$

and we have $[E, F] = P$, $[R, E] = E$, $[R, F] = -F$ and P commutes with everything.

In the bosonic case I could take $\mathfrak{sl}(2) \subseteq \mathfrak{gl}(2)$ which is the traceless part. Instead here the identity is on the RHS of a commutator, so I can't throw it away. Same goes for all the others. So $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$ is NOT a product, also it is not simple, there are no invariant subalgebras, so I can't take any quotients. Semisimple means if there are invariant subalgebras then....

In supersymmetric quantum mechanics we have that P is the hamiltonian, it generates time translations, but it has a fermionic square root, which is a general feature. But then the commutator that we need to check to have a super Lie algebras is trivial, since translations commute with everything.

Lecture 2.2 Four ways of looking at $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$

$\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$ = matrices acting on a $1|1$ dimensional super vector space $V = V_0 \oplus V_1$ with a convenient basis written above.

four ways of looking at $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$:

1. linear transformations of a $1|1$ dim vector space
2. differential operators on the odd line $\mathbb{C}^{0|1}$
3. the algebra of creation and annihilation operators for one fermionic state (we talked about the creation operators in general terms already). The Fock space is $\mathbb{C}^{1|1}$ and the single particle Hilbert space is $\mathbb{C}^{0|1}$. Essentially this says " $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$ is the simplest Clifford algebra".
4. the algebra of spacetime symmetries as " $\mathcal{N} = 2$ supersymmetric quantum mechanics". Essentially this says " $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$ is the simplest supersymmetry algebra".

We'll also see that it's in some ways like representation theory of $SU(2)$ but there will be some key differences: we'll have only two representations spin 0 and spin $1/2$, in this sense it'll be simpler.

The logical order would be to do first 3. and then 4. because 3. introduces Clifford algebra which is needed for 4. But we'll start with 4. to examine the physical supersymmetric system and get a feel for it, to then go back to 3.

2.1 Linear algebra

In the normal case, $\mathfrak{gl}(2)$ is a product of Lie algebras:

- $\mathfrak{sl}(2)$ = traceless part

- $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ = center (commutes with everything)

We can study them separately, find representations of the two factors and then use those representations to get representations of $\mathfrak{gl}(2)$.

In the super case this doesn't quite work. The trace should vanish on commutators $\text{tr}([A, B]) = 0$, so the traceless matrices form a subalgebra.

We would like for the same to be true for the super trace, but $P = [E, F]$ is not traceless with the normal definition. So let's consider odd matrices and see the result:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & B' \\ C' & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} BC' & 0 \\ 0 & CB' \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.2)$$

so the anticommutator (anti since we have two odd matrices) is

$$\begin{pmatrix} BC' + B'C & 0 \\ 0 & CB' + C'B \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.3)$$

so that suggests the following formula for the supertrace:

$$\text{str} \begin{pmatrix} A & B \\ C & D \end{pmatrix} = \text{tr}(A) - \text{tr}(D) = \text{tr} \left((-)^F \begin{pmatrix} A & B \\ C & D \end{pmatrix} \right) \quad (2.4)$$

where $(-)^F$ is the parity operator

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.5)$$

on the supervector space.

So now let $\mathfrak{sl}(1|1) = \{X \in \mathfrak{gl}(1|1) : \text{str}(X) = 0\}$ which is spanned by E, F, P since $\text{str}(R) = 1 \neq 0$. For now it looks similar to $\mathfrak{sl}(2)$ since we have three matrices, but it's different since we have the identity, meaning we still have a central element. While what is taken out, R , is NOT central.

Another element of superlinear algebra which is different is the transpose. So the key property of the trace was that it vanishes on commutators, what is then the key property of the transpose? Normally we have $(XY)^T = Y^T X^T$, but because we're moving the matrices past one another, then for the super transpose we need to insert a sign

$$(XY)^T = (-)^{\sigma_x \sigma_y} Y^T X^T \quad (2.6)$$

Let's take a product of odd matrices:

$$\left[\begin{pmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & B' \\ C' & 0 \end{pmatrix} \right]^T = \begin{pmatrix} BC' & 0 \\ 0 & CB' \end{pmatrix}^T = \begin{pmatrix} C'^T B^T & 0 \\ 0 & B'^T C^T \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.7)$$

$$= - \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -C'^T \\ B'^T & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -C^T \\ B^T & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.8)$$

We can see that the following choice works:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{pmatrix}^T = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -C^T \\ B^T & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.9)$$

But this seems arbitrary, I could have put the $-$ on B^T . To see why this is the better choice, let's examine another property which is what happens in the euclidean scalar product: $g(v, Xw) = g(X^T v, w)$. Here also we need a sign for the super case:

$$g(v, Xw) = (-)^{\sigma_v \sigma_X} g(X^T v, w) \quad (2.10)$$

Let's consider v and X odd and w even:

$$g\left(\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}\right) = C = C^T = -g\left(\begin{pmatrix} 0 & -C^T \\ B^T & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}\right) \quad (2.11)$$

So here we see that the above choice works.

Note: it's no longer true that $(X^T)^T = X$, I actually get a $-$, but applying it four times I get back the original matrix. This is typical of fermions! When doing a certain operation gives the identity in the normal case, in the case of fermions it gives a $-$.

2.2 Differential operators on the super line

Let's consider $\mathbb{C}^{0|1}$. How is it different from a line? We see it by considering polynomial functions on the line $V = \mathbb{C}^{1|0}$: we have $1, x, x^2, \dots =: \mathbb{C}[x] =$ algebra of creation operators, considering x as a creation operator. But where does x live? Well it's a functional on a vector space so it lives in the dual. So the algebra is generated by V^\vee (the dual vector space which is simply made up of the linear coordinates).

So now what are the functions on $V = \mathbb{C}^{0|1}$? Well we have the algebra of fermionic creation operators generated by V^\vee ("Grassmann numbers"). It is two dimensional, I only have $1, \theta$ with $\theta^2 = 0$ by supercommutativity.

For the normal line, a "point on the line" is a map from functions to numbers $\mathbb{C}[x] \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$, it sends x to some number that is it's coordinate.

Instead, the odd line has only one point! We only have the map $\mathbb{C}[\theta] \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ which sends θ to 0.

Recall: if I want a map $\mathbb{R}[x]/(x^2+1) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ there are no possibilities, since on the left $x^2 = -1$ and on the right nothing squares to -1 . This is way of saying that the space on the left has "no real points" and the solution is to use complex points.

The same reasoning applies above! The odd line has only one *even* point, but we should actually be looking for odd points!

Now let's move to the concept of differential operators. We have $\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}$. So in total we can construct the following:

$$1, \theta, \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}, \theta \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \quad (2.12)$$

of which the first and the last are even while the middle ones are odd. These have the following commutators:

$$[1, \cdot] = 0 \quad (2.13)$$

$$\left[\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}, \theta \right] = 1 = \left[\theta, \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \right] \quad (2.14)$$

$$\left[\theta \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}, \theta \right] = \theta \quad (2.15)$$

$$\left[\theta \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}, \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \right] = -\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} \quad (2.16)$$

which are exactly the commutators we have on $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$ with the following identifications!

$$1 = P, \quad \theta = E, \quad \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} = F, \quad \theta \frac{\partial}{\partial\theta} = R \quad (2.17)$$

2.3 Creation and annihilation

We can see the action of F :

$$F : \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.18)$$

and I can rename the two states and call the first one $|0\rangle$ "vacuum" and call the second $|\psi\rangle$ "one particle fermionic state". We then have:

$$F : |0\rangle \mapsto |\psi\rangle \quad (2.19)$$

$$E : |\psi\rangle \mapsto |0\rangle, \quad |0\rangle \mapsto 0 \quad (2.20)$$

So E does the opposite of F . Instead $-R$ somehow "counts fermions", but in order to understand this we actually have to define

$$\tilde{R} = R - \frac{1}{2}P = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.21)$$

which has the same commutation relations as R since P is central. Now we have:

$$\tilde{R} |0\rangle = 0 \quad (2.22)$$

$$\tilde{R} |\psi\rangle = \tilde{R}F |0\rangle = (F\tilde{R} - F) |0\rangle = -F |0\rangle = -\psi \quad (2.23)$$

So $-\tilde{R}$ tells us that $|0\rangle$ has 0 fermionic particles and $|\psi\rangle$ has 1.

Lecture 3.1/2 Unitarity (and other things)

Now we want to consider $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$ as $\mathcal{N} = 2$ supersymmetric quantum mechanics. But in order to have a quantum theory we need to have unitarity.

Let us first clear up the difference between observables and infinitesimal symmetries. The first are Hermitian operators, while infinitesimal symmetries are represented by antihermitian operator. And clearly I can get a Hermitian operator from an antihermitian one and vice versa, but the way of doing this is not unique: I can multiply by i or $-i$. Typically in physics I multiply the observable by i and then I exponentiate it to get a non infinitesimal symmetry, i.e. a unitary operator. We'll see that the relation between superhermitian and superantihermitian operators is not as simple. Let us first study an example.

Example (Real Lie algebras). First of all note that the observables (e.g. Hermitian operators) form a real algebra, not a complex one. Symmetry algebras usually have a real form, normally dictated by unitarity.

Considering the typical example of rotations, the commutator of the observables is the following:

$$[L_i, L_j] = i\epsilon_{ijk}L_k \quad (2.24)$$

while for infinitesimal symmetries we have:

$$[R_i, R_j] = \epsilon_{ijk}R_k \quad (2.25)$$

but mathematically they're just different conventions and both are REAL Lie algebras. It's clear that there should be this difference: the commutator of Hermitian or antihermitian operators is antihermitian, so considering infinitesimal symmetries I'll just have another antihermitian operator on the right, while for observables I need a factor of i (or $-i$) in order to get an antihermitian operator from a hermitian one.

The same complex Lie algebra can have different real forms! Take for example $\mathfrak{su}(2) = \mathfrak{so}(3)$ represented by $\sigma_x, \sigma_y, \sigma_z$, but there's also $\mathfrak{sl}(2, \mathbb{R}) = \mathfrak{so}(2, 1)$ that can be represented by:

$$H = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad E = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad F = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.26)$$

with commutators:

$$[H, E] = 2E, \quad [H, F] = -2F, \quad [E, F] = H \quad (2.27)$$

which look exactly like ladder operators. This means that if I can make a complex change of basis of L_x, L_y, L_z I could get the same algebra: I simply take $L_z, L_{\pm} = L_x \pm iL_y$. Note however that $\mathfrak{so}(2, 1)$ is not compact, while $\mathfrak{so}(3)$ IS. (Essentially compact means if I do the non infinitesimal transformation I eventually get back to the same point, which is true for rotations, but not for boosts)

Before getting to a super Hilbert space and superhermitian matrices, let us recall the definition of Hilbert space

Definition 2. A Hilbert space is a complex vector space \mathcal{H} with a Hermitian inner product $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle : \mathcal{H} \times \mathcal{H} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ with the following properties:

1. linear in the second argument: $\langle u, \alpha v \rangle = \alpha \langle u, v \rangle$
2. conjugate symmetric: $\langle u, v \rangle = \overline{\langle v, u \rangle}$
3. positive definite: $\langle u, u \rangle > 0$

A non infinitesimal symmetry M preserves the inner product if

$$\langle Mu, Mv \rangle = \langle u, v \rangle \quad \forall u, v \in \mathcal{H} \quad (2.28)$$

Recalling the definition of the adjoint:

$$\langle u, Mv \rangle = \langle M^\dagger u, v \rangle \quad (2.29)$$

we can then write

$$\langle M^\dagger Mu, v \rangle = \langle u, v \rangle \implies M^\dagger M = \mathbb{1} \quad (2.30)$$

which is what we call unitarity.

For infinitesimal symmetries we have $M = \mathbb{1} + \epsilon X$, which inserted above gives:

$$(\mathbb{1} + \epsilon X^\dagger)(\mathbb{1} + \epsilon X) = \mathbb{1} + \epsilon(X^\dagger + X) = \mathbb{1} \implies X^\dagger = -X \quad (2.31)$$

$$(\text{or } \langle u, Xv \rangle + \langle Xu, v \rangle = 0) \quad (2.32)$$

This is what was meant when we said that infinitesimal symmetries are represented by antihermitian operators.

Definition 3. A super Hilbert space structure is a super vector space $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{H}_+ \oplus \mathcal{H}_-$ with an inner product $g : \mathcal{H} \times \mathcal{H} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ with the properties:

1. linear in the second argument: $g(u, \alpha v) = \alpha g(u, v)$
2. conjugate super symmetric: $g(u, v) = (-)^{|u||v|} \overline{g(v, u)}$
($|u| = 0$ for $u \in \mathcal{H}_+$, $|u| = 1$ for $u \in \mathcal{H}_-$)
3. positive definite over \mathcal{H}_+ : $g(u, u) > 0$ for $u \in \mathcal{H}_+$
4. σ -positive-definite over \mathcal{H}_- : $i\sigma g(\psi, \psi) > 0$ for $\psi \in \mathcal{H}_-$ with $\sigma = \pm 1$ is a sign that we can choose.

But we should be worried since there's not a canonical choice for σ .

If $(\mathcal{H}, \langle, \rangle)$ is a Hilbert space with a splitting $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{H}_0 \oplus \mathcal{H}_1$, then \mathcal{H} with the inner product $g_\sigma(\cdot, \cdot) = \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_0 - i\sigma \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_1$ is a σ -positive-definite Hilbert space (I can also go in the opposite direction).

Following the normal case, we can then define a superantihermitian operator by

$$g(Xu, v) + (-)^{|X||u|}g(u, Xv) = 0 \quad (2.33)$$

and it may also be called an infinitesimal supersymmetry. By taking a basis for \mathcal{H} we can write X as

$$X = \begin{pmatrix} \alpha & \beta \\ \gamma & \delta \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.34)$$

by decomposing its action on \mathcal{H}_+ and on \mathcal{H}_- . Here $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta$ are generally operators. We then have four cases to study for the superantihermitian matrix:

1. u and v even

$$\langle \alpha u, v \rangle_0 + \langle u, \alpha v \rangle_0 = 0 \quad (2.35)$$

2. ψ and ξ odd

$$-i\sigma(\langle \delta \psi, \xi \rangle_1 + \langle \psi, \delta \xi \rangle_1) = 0 \quad (2.36)$$

these two basically say that α and δ are antihermitian matrices, which is what we expected since they're the even parts which typically follow the normal rules.

3. ψ odd and u even:

$$\langle \beta \psi, u \rangle_0 - (-)i\sigma \langle \psi, \gamma u \rangle_1 = 0 \quad (2.37)$$

but they can also be in opposite order:

$$-i\sigma \langle \gamma u, \psi \rangle_1 + \langle u, \beta \psi \rangle_0 = 0 \quad (2.38)$$

In fact these are the same condition, since we can first rewrite the last equation as

$$\langle i\sigma \gamma u, \psi \rangle_1 + \langle \beta^\dagger u, \psi \rangle_1 = 0 \quad (2.39)$$

and then we get that

$$\beta^\dagger = -i\sigma \gamma \quad (2.40)$$

or equivalently

$$\gamma^\dagger = -i\sigma \beta \quad (2.41)$$

So this is what it means for a matrix to be super anti Hermitian, where it's important to note that β and γ are not independent.

Let us study the case $\mathfrak{sl}(1|1)$.

In particular we now know what it means to take all super unitary $1|1$ matrices, i.e. $\mathfrak{u}(1|1)$ starting from $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1, \mathbb{C})$. So it's relatively simple since $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta$ are just numbers. In particular α and δ have to be anti Hermitian, which for numbers means they're purely imaginary $\alpha, \delta \in i\mathbb{R}$. We can then start writing a basis:

$$\begin{pmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{pmatrix}, \quad \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & -i \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.42)$$

while for γ and β we have $\bar{\gamma} = -i\sigma\beta$. We then get

$$q_1 := \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ i\sigma & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad q_2 := \begin{pmatrix} 0 & i \\ \sigma & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.43)$$

we see that they have the following commutators:

$$[q_1, q_1] = 2q_1^2 = 2\sigma \begin{pmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.44)$$

$$[q_2, q_2] = 2q_2^2 \quad (2.45)$$

$$[q_1, q_2] = 0 \quad (2.46)$$

and these are different commutation relations than the ones we had for $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$, but I can make them the same by a complex change of coordinates ($q_1 \pm iq_2$) which of course is not allowed in the real Lie algebra because it messes up the unitary structure. So this is its unitary real form, but as a complex Lie algebra it's the same one we were writing before.

Same idea as in $\mathfrak{su}(2)$! We first complexify it and study the representations of $\mathfrak{sl}(2, \mathbb{C})$ which is easier because we can build ladder operators. At the end of the day you then demand that the lowering operator is the adjoint of the raising operator which makes it a real representation of the thing you started with.

The reason it's called $\mathcal{N} = 2$ supersymmetric quantum mechanics is that if we think of

$$p = \begin{pmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.47)$$

as the Hamiltonian, then we now have 2 anticommuting square roots of the time translation operator. So $\mathcal{N} = 2$ supersymmetric quantum mechanics is really just the unitary real form of $\mathfrak{gl}(1|1)$, but we have to be careful with the unitarity constraints. First, remember that an infinitesimal bosonic symmetry is represented by an antihermitian matrix and we could get an observable out of it by dividing by $\pm i$. So hopefully there's a similar way of associating an observable matrix to something that generates a fermionic symmetry.

If X is odd superantihermitian we have the constraint

$$\langle u, X\psi \rangle - i\sigma \langle Xu, \psi \rangle = 0 \quad (2.48)$$

and we want to use this to say that some matrix related to X is Hermitian (and therefore an observable). Let $\sigma = +1$ and let j be a square root of i (or $i\sigma$ more generally).

...

$$\langle u, X\psi \rangle = j^2 \langle Xu, \psi \rangle \quad (2.49)$$

$$j^{-1} \langle u, X\psi \rangle = j \langle Xu, \psi \rangle \quad (2.50)$$

$$\langle u, j^{-1}X\psi \rangle = \langle j^{-1}Xu, \psi \rangle \quad (2.51)$$

where in the last step we used the fact that since j is a square root of i then its inverse is just its complex conjugate. So $j^{-1}X$ is Hermitian and observable.

So just as in the standard case there's a correspondance between generators of odd symmetries (i.e. superantihermitian things) and observables, this time with a fourth root of -1 instead of a square root. And this is why when you're not careful of thinking when an observable is an observable and when it's generating a symmetry you get confused.

So let's see what observables correspond to the two matrices we got before. Also, traditionally we use Q to represent supercharges, meaning Hermitian operators, so that's why before we used lowercase letters.

$$Q_1 := \frac{q_1}{j} = j^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ j^2 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j^{-1} \\ j & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.52)$$

$$Q_2 := \frac{q_2}{j} = j^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j^2 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j \\ j^{-1} & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.53)$$

Which are in fact Hermitian since $\bar{j} = j^{-1}$. If I square them I then get the identity, whereas if I squared the previous ones I would get i times the identity, but now the i is now absorbed in the Q s. This is why in the physics convention if I write down the structure constants for a real super Lie algebra then I get i s for the bosonic things and no i for the fermionic things: commutators of Hermitian matrices are antihermitian, while anticommutators of Hermitian matrices are Hermitian. Also we get the weird result that the structure constants of a real super Lie algebra are all purely real or purely imaginary.

We can then pick $j = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(1 + i)$ so we can write the Q s in terms of Pauli matrices (since every 2 by 2 Hermitian matrix is a real linear combination of Pauli matrices and since they have zero diagonal there's no σ_z):

$$Q_1 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(\sigma_x + \sigma_y) \quad (2.54)$$

$$Q_2 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(\sigma_x - \sigma_y) \quad (2.55)$$

So this is an explanation of why unitarity is strange for superalgebras: because it's the correspondance in what you mean with an observable and what you mean by a generator of a symmetry, which is more subtle than in the normal case.

Why did we choose $\sigma = +1$? Because we wanted the Hamiltonian to have a positive spectrum. We define

$$P := \frac{P}{i} = \mathbb{1} = Q_1^2 \quad (2.56)$$

This implies $P \geq 0$ since for a state $|u\rangle$ we have

$$\langle u| P |u\rangle = \langle u| Q_1^\dagger Q_1 |u\rangle = \|Q_1 |u\rangle\|^2 \geq 0 \quad (2.57)$$

So not only is P a operator with real eigenvalues, but also it's real eigenvalues are the squares of the real eigenvalues of Q_1 , and this is called the *BPS bound*. So $\sigma = +1$ is a convention to get the spectrum of P to be positive (doing the opposite would be like reversing the sign of the time).

Lecture 4.1: Supersymmetric quantum mechanics

Why are tangent vectors the same as derivations? Let M be a space (manifold), a one parameter family of symmetries of M is a map $\phi : M \times \mathbb{R}_t \rightarrow M$ that maps $(p, t) \mapsto \phi_t p$. Such a map gives me a way of taking derivatives. When the space is more than one dimensional we need a way of knowing "how to move on the manifold", which is given by a vector. If f is a function on M , the "derivative of f along ϕ at p " is

$$X_\phi(f)(p) := \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(\phi_t(p)) - f(p)}{t} \quad (2.58)$$

This defines a derivation of the algebra of functions on M , meaning

$$X_\phi(fg) = X_\phi(f)g + fX_\phi(g) \quad (2.59)$$

(which is obeyed since it's just a normal derivative) But this is really defining a tangent vector at p .

That's why in general it's helpful to have multiple descriptions of the same object, for example one description may be more intuitive but another may be easier to generalize.

Good news: once you understand what it means to be unitary, you can then safely ignore it since there's a way of passing between symmetry generators and observables. It's fine then to just work with observables.

Observables		Symmetry generators	
Even	$P = \mathbb{1}, R = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$	$p = \begin{pmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{pmatrix}, r = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & -i \end{pmatrix}$	
Odd	$Q_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j^{-1} \\ j & 0 \end{pmatrix}, Q_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j \\ j^{-1} & 0 \end{pmatrix}$	$q_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix}, q_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & i \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$	

To go from right to left, above I divide by i , below I divide by j .
Computing a few commutators we get:

$$\{Q_1, Q_1\} = 2P \quad (2.60)$$

$$[R, Q_1] = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j^{-1} \\ -j & 0 \end{pmatrix} = -iQ_2 \quad (2.61)$$

$$[R, Q_2] = +iQ_1 \quad (2.62)$$

so the commutators have an i while the anticommutators do not. Choosing the convention of working with the symmetry generators we get real structure constants and the matrices have a "nicer" form since there are no j s. So we can just choose one and work with it but it's important to remember this difference.

In supersymmetric quantum mechanics, P (generator of time translations) is the Hamiltonian and we have

If I want to represent a super Lie algebra I need to start with a representation of the bosonic part, which has two commuting Hermitian operators P, R . So we have joint eigenspaces labeled by two numbers (p, r) , respectively *energy* and *R charge*. What do we do in representation theory? Take commuting operators and use other operators as ladder operators.

Now in $u(1|1)$ we should think of raising and lowering operators in terms of the odd things

$$Q = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}Q_1 + iQ_2 \quad (2.63)$$

$$Q^\dagger = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}Q_1 - iQ_2 \quad (2.64)$$

which have commutators

$$\{Q, Q^\dagger\} = 2P \quad (2.65)$$

$$\{Q, Q\} = \{Q^\dagger, Q^\dagger\} = 0 \quad (2.66)$$

$$[Q, P] = 0 \implies p \text{ stays the same} \quad (2.67)$$

$$[R, Q] = -Q \implies r \text{ lowered by one} \quad (2.68)$$

so its similar to the situation with angular momentum.

So now lets work as in quantum mechanics: start with a spin, act with a lowering operator until I reach the null state and then I'll know how to construct all states.

Let's start with a state of "highest R charge" $|p, r, \pm\rangle$, meaning that if I try to increase it I get 0: $Q^\dagger |p, r, \pm\rangle = 0$. (We assume there is such a state since we're considering finite dimensional representations) Acting with

Q instead gives:

$$Q |p, r, \pm\rangle = \alpha |p, r - 1, \mp\rangle \quad (2.69)$$

$$Q^\dagger Q |p, r, \pm\rangle = \alpha Q^\dagger |p, r - 1, \mp\rangle = \alpha \bar{\alpha} |p, r, \pm\rangle \quad (2.70)$$

$$\{Q^\dagger, Q\} |p, r, \pm\rangle = 2P |p, r, \pm\rangle = 2p |p, r, \pm\rangle \implies |\alpha|^2 = 2p \quad (2.71)$$

So we have $\alpha = \sqrt{2p}$ up to a phase which is not important as it can be absorbed into the operators. Also, we now have another confirmation that $p \geq 0$.

Q annihilates $|p, r, \pm\rangle$ if and only if $p = 0$. This is interesting because it tells us that the spectrum of the Hamiltonian determines whether the representation is trivial or not. What do we get if we keep lowering?

$$Q |p, r - 1, \mp\rangle = \frac{1}{\alpha} Q^2 |p, r, \pm\rangle = \frac{1}{2\alpha} \{Q, Q\} |p, r, \pm\rangle = 0 \quad (2.72)$$

So I can't lower more than once! We have exactly two kinds of representations:

1. "Short", one dimensional: $|p = 0, r, \pm\rangle$
2. "Long", two dimensional: $|p, r, \pm\rangle, |p, r - 1, \mp\rangle$

So there's a lower bound of the energy which can call 0 and it can't be shifted because it's on the right side of the commutator, so it's really zero energy. We also have positive energy states which come in pairs of opposite parity.

If I wanted to calculate a partition function, only the vacuum would contribute, since there's always a boson and a fermion at the same energy level. So in some cases we only need zero energy states, i.e. states on the *BPS bound*.

For a free particle on a line we have the Hilbert space $\mathcal{H} = L^2(\mathbb{R}) \ni \psi(x)$ and the Hamiltonian

$$P = -\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} = \left(\frac{1}{i} \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\right)^2 = \hat{p}^2 \quad (2.73)$$

simplest way to make it supersymmetric: tensor with $\mathbb{C}^{1|1}$. So we have $\mathcal{H}_0 = L^2(\mathbb{R})$ and $\mathcal{H}_1 = L^2(\mathbb{R})$ which can be interpreted as a particle with an internal switch so that it can be either bosonic or fermionic. An example of such a system is an hydrogen atom which can be either ionized or not. So this model is not completely unreasonable.

$$P = -\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} \otimes \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.74)$$

$$Q_1 = \frac{1}{i} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \otimes \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j^{-1} \\ j & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.75)$$

$$Q_1 = \frac{1}{i} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \otimes \begin{pmatrix} 0 & j \\ j^{-1} & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.76)$$

$$R = 1 \otimes \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.77)$$

Now recall $Q^\dagger = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$, so we have

$$Q^\dagger \begin{pmatrix} \psi(x) \\ \phi(x) \end{pmatrix} \sim \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad Q \begin{pmatrix} \psi(x) \\ \phi(x) \end{pmatrix} \sim \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{\partial \psi}{\partial x} \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.78)$$

which gives the de Rham complex of \mathbb{R} .

A Useful definitions

A.1 Algebraic structures

Let us recall a few useful definitions.

Definition 4 (Field). A field \mathbb{F} is a set with two binary operations called addition and multiplication satisfying the following field axioms:

- Associativity of addition and multiplication
- Commutativity of addition and multiplication
- Additive and multiplicative identity (resp. 0 and 1)
- Additive inverse
- Multiplicative inverse for every element except 0
- Distributivity of multiplication over addition.

or, more simply:

- Abelian group under addition
- nonzero elements are an abelian group under multiplication
- Distributivity of multiplication over addition.

Given a field we can define a vector space over it:

Definition 5 (Vector space). A vector space V over a field \mathbb{F} is a set with two operations:

1. addition $+: V \times V \rightarrow V$,
2. multiplication by a scalar $\cdot: \mathbb{F} \times V \rightarrow V$

such that it is an abelian group with respect to addition and has the following properties: ($x, y \in \mathbb{F}$, $\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w} \in V$)

- $x \cdot (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w}) = x \cdot \mathbf{v} + x \cdot \mathbf{w}$
- $(x + y) \cdot \mathbf{v} = x \cdot \mathbf{v} + y \cdot \mathbf{v}$
- $(xy) \cdot (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w}) = x \cdot (y \cdot \mathbf{v})$
- $1 \cdot \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{v}$

However there are more general concepts which can be useful.

A ring generalizes the concept of field, without requiring commutativity and inverses of multiplication.

Definition 6 (Ring). A ring is a set with two binary operations called addition and multiplication satisfying the following ring axioms:

- Abelian group under addition
- Semigroup under multiplication (i.e. is only associative)
- Distributivity of multiplication from left and right over addition.

In addition, if it has a multiplicative identity (i.e. it is a monoid under multiplication) it's called a ring with unity.

We also define *division ring* a ring in which every nonzero element has a multiplicative inverse (i.e. a field in which multiplication may be noncommutative).

Now, just as one can define vector spaces over fields, one can define the analogous but more general concept of modules over rings.

Definition 7 (Module). A left module over a ring R consists of an abelian group M and a "scalar multiplication" between elements of R and M that gives another element in M with the following properties: ($r, s \in R, x, y \in M$)

- $r \cdot (x + y) = r \cdot x + r \cdot y$
- $(r + s) \cdot x = r \cdot x + s \cdot x$
- $(rs) \cdot x = r \cdot (s \cdot x)$
- $1 \cdot x = x$

Then, it can happen that in a vector space we have a natural concept of a product between vectors that gives another vector, for example the the vector product \times in \mathbb{R}^3 or the obvious product in the vector space of polynomials. This additional operation gives rise to the concept of an algebra.

Definition 8 (Algebra). An algebra is a vector space V with an additional operation (multiplication) $\cdot : V \times V \rightarrow V$ which is bilinear and associative.

Given an algebra we can then define the commutator

$$[A, B] = AB - BA \tag{A.1}$$

which satisfies

$$[A, B] = -[B, A] \tag{A.2}$$

and is another bilinear operation $[\cdot, \cdot] : V \times V \rightarrow V$. This then raises the question: is V with the operation $[\cdot, \cdot]$ also an algebra? But the answer is no since the operation is not associative. Instead we have:

$$[[A, B], C] = [A, [B, C]] + [B, [C, A]] \tag{A.3}$$

in which the last term ruins the associativity. Usually the equality above is written as:

$$[[A, B], C] + [[B, C], A] + [[C, A], B] = 0 \quad (\text{A.4})$$

which is called the Jacobi identity.

However such an operation appears often enough that the resulting structure deserves a name:

Definition 9 (Lie algebra). A Lie algebra is a vector space with a bilinear operation $[\cdot, \cdot] : V \times V \rightarrow V$ with the following properties: ($A, B \in V$)

1. $[A, B] = -[B, A]$
2. $[[A, B], C] + [[B, C], A] + [[C, A], B] = 0$

i.e. it is antisymmetric and satisfies the Jacobi identity. The operation is generally called *bracket*, but if it is constructed as above it is usually called *commutator*.

Note that a Lie algebra is not in fact an algebra, as it is not associative. In fact the Jacobi identity somehow measures the non-associativity of the bracket.

Also note that a bilinear operation $[\cdot, \cdot] : V \times V \rightarrow V$ is the same thing as a *linear* operation from the tensor product $[\cdot, \cdot] : V \otimes V \rightarrow V$. This is just the universal property defining the tensor product.

All these structures have their *super* counterpart which is constructed with the following guidelines:

- add a Koszul sign every time one operator is passed after another,
- preserve parity.

A.2 Representation theory

Given a group, the concept of its representation arises.

But what is a representation? When you think of symmetries, you can consider them as objects on their own, that's basically the idea of a group. Given a symmetry we can then ask what kind of objects have this symmetry: that's the idea of a representation. It basically tells us what kind of objects can I have in space. For example with systems of a certain spin we have that the same symmetry (rotations) is "represented" in different ways.

We can therefore give the following definition.

Definition 10. A representation of a group G on a vector space V is a map $\rho : G \rightarrow \text{Aut}(V)$, where the automorphism group of a vector space V , $\text{Aut}(V)$, is the group of invertible linear maps from V to V . The map must have the following property:

$$\rho(g \cdot g') = \rho(g) \circ \rho(g') \quad (\text{A.5})$$

where \circ is simply the composition.

In other words, we need a group homeomorphism from g to $\text{Aut}(V)$.

It is also useful to define the same concept for algebras and Lie algebras. The only difference is that we will have algebra homomorphisms and Lie algebra homomorphisms. Let us start by defining those.

Definition 11. An algebra homomorphism is a map $\phi : A \rightarrow B$ between algebras over a field \mathbb{F} that satisfies: $(x, y \in A, k \in \mathbb{F})$

1. $\phi(kx) = k\phi(x)$
2. $\phi(x + y) = \phi(x) + \phi(y)$
3. $\phi(xy) = \phi(x)\phi(y)$

i.e. it is a linear map that preserves the product.

Definition 12. A Lie algebra homomorphism is a linear map $\phi : A \rightarrow B$ between Lie algebras over a field \mathbb{F} that satisfies: $(x, y \in A, k \in \mathbb{F})$

$$\phi([x, y]_A) = [\phi(x)\phi(y)]_B \quad (\text{A.6})$$

We can then note that given a vector space V , the space of linear maps from V to itself, $\text{End}(V)$, naturally has a (Lie) algebra structure (with "product" given by composition and bracket given by the commutator). So the following definition makes sense.

Definition 13. A representation of a (Lie) algebra A on a vector space V is a (Lie) algebra homomorphism $\rho : A \rightarrow \text{End}(V)$.

More explicitly, for Lie algebras we have

$$\rho_g(\rho_h(v)) - \rho_h(\rho_g(v)) = \rho_{[g, h]}(v) \quad (\text{A.7})$$

i.e. "The matrix $\rho_{[g, h]}$ is the commutator of the matrices ρ_g and ρ_h ."

Furthermore, the following remarks are useful in practical situations:

1. A map $\rho : A \rightarrow \text{End}(A)$ is equivalent to a map $\rho : A \otimes V \rightarrow V$.
2. Given representations over vector spaces V and W it's possible to construct one over the duals, over the direct sum and over the tensor product. In particular for the tensor product we have:

$$\rho_{V \otimes W} = \rho_V \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes \rho_W \quad (\text{A.8})$$