IDENTITIES IN ITERATED RASCAL TRIANGLES

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Abstract. In this manuscript we show new binomial identities in iterated rascal triangles. In particular, iterated rascal numbers are closely related to $(1,q)$-binomial coefficients. Finally, we state an open conjecture about the relation between iterated rascal numbers and (p,q)-binomial coefficients.

Contents

1. Introduction

In 2010, three middle school students, Alif Anggoro, Eddy Liu, and Angus Tulloch [1], were challenged to provide the next row for the number triangle shown below:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & & & 1 & & & \\ & & 1 & & 1 & & \\ & 1 & & 2 & & 1 & \\ 1 & & 3 & & 3 & & 1 \end{array}$$

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Sources: https://github.com/kolosovpetro/IdentitiesInRascalTriangle

While the expected answer was “1 4 6 4 1” Anggoro, Liu, and Tulloch suggested “1 4 5 4 1” instead. They devised this new row via so-called diamond formula:

$$\mathbf{South} = \frac{\mathbf{East} \cdot \mathbf{West} + 1}{\mathbf{North}}$$

So that upcoming rows of the triangle are

n/k	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
0	1							
1	1	1						
2	1	2	1					
3	1	3	3	1				
4	1	4	5	4	1			
5	1	5	7	7	5	1		
6	1	6	9	10	9	6	1	
7	1	7	11	13	13	11	7	1

Table 1. Rascal triangle. See the OEIS sequence [2].

Since then, a lot of work has been done over the topic of rascal triangles. Numerous identities and relations have been revealed. For instance, few combinatorial interpretations of rascal numbers provided at [3], in particular, these interpretations establish a relation between rascal numbers and combinatorics of binary words. Few generalization approaches were proposed, namely generalized and iterated rascal triangles [4, 5]. In particular, the concept of iterated rascal numbers establishes a close connection between rascal numbers and binomial coefficients.

2. Binomial identities in Iterated Rascal Triangles

Prior we begin our discussion it is worth to introduce a few preliminary facts and statements. Define the iterated rascal number

Definition 2.1. *Iterated rascal number* [5]

$$\binom{n}{k}_i = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n-k}{m}\binom{k}{m} \tag{2.1}$$

First important thing is to notice that iterated rascal number is a partial case of Vandermonde convolution. Consider Vandermonde convolution

$$\binom{a+b}{r} = \sum_{m=0}^{r} \binom{a}{m}\binom{b}{r-m}$$

Thus,

$$\binom{n}{k}_i = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n-k}{m}\binom{k}{m} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n-k}{m}\binom{k}{k-m} \tag{2.2}$$

Therefore, iterated rascal number is partial case of Vandermonde convolution with upper summation bound equals to i. Without further hesitation consider our findings.

Proposition 2.2. *Iterated rascal triangle equals to Pascal's triangle up to i-th column.*

$$\binom{n}{k}_i = \binom{n}{k}, \quad 0 \le k \le i \tag{2.3}$$

Proof. Proof is given by [5]. □

Then binomial identity follows

$$\binom{n}{i-j}_i = \binom{n}{i-j}$$

Applying binomial coefficients symmetry principle we obtain

$$\binom{n}{n-i+j}_i = \binom{n}{n-i+j}$$

Proposition 2.3. *Iterated rascal triangle equals to Pascal's triangle up to $2i+1$-th row*

$$\binom{n}{k}_i = \binom{n}{k}, \quad 0 \le n \le 2i+1$$

Therefore, for every fixed $i \ge 0$

$$\binom{2i+1-j}{k}_i = \binom{2i+1-j}{k} \tag{2.4}$$

Equation (2.4) is of interest because in contrast to rascal column identity (2.3) it gives relation over k for each i, so that it is true for all cases in i, k: $i < k$, $i = k$ and $k > i$.

Taking $t \geq 2i + 1$ for every fixed $i \geq 0$

$$\binom{t-j}{k}_{t-i-1} = \binom{t-j}{k}$$

Moreover, equation (2.4) gives Vandermonde-like identity

$$\binom{2i+1-n}{k} = \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{2i+1-n-k}{m} \binom{k}{m}$$

For $k = j$ yields the identity for iterated rascal number

$$\binom{2i+1-j}{j}_i = \binom{2i+1-j}{j}, \quad 0 \leq j \leq i$$
$$\binom{2i+1-j}{2i+1-2j}_i = \binom{2i+1-j}{2i+1-2j}$$
$$\binom{t-j}{t-2j}_{t-i-1} = \binom{t-j}{t-2j}, \quad t \geq 2i+1, \quad 0 \leq j \leq t-i-1$$

Proof. Proof of proposition 2.3. We have three possible relations between i, k: $k < i$, $k = i$, $k > i$. So we have to prove that for every i, k

$$\sum_{m=0}^{k} \binom{2i+1-n-k}{m} \binom{k}{m} - \sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{2i+1-n-k}{m} \binom{k}{m} = 0$$

For the case $k < i$ proof in Jenna Gregory et al. [5]. For the case $k = i$ proof is trivial. Thus, the remaining case is $k > i$ yields that

$$\sum_{m=i+1}^{k} \binom{2i+1-n-k}{m} \binom{k}{m} = 0$$

Considering the constraints,

$$\begin{cases} n \geq 0 \\ k \geq i+1 \\ 2i+1-n-k \leq i-n \\ m \geq i+1 \end{cases}$$

Thus,

$$\sum_{m=i+1}^{k} \binom{2i+1-n-k}{m}\binom{k}{m}$$

is indeed equals zero because binomial coefficients $\binom{i-n-s}{i+1+s}$ are zero for each $i, n, s \geq 0$. Therefore, the proposition (2.3) is true. $\square$

Considering the table of differences of binomial coefficients and iterated rascal numbers

```
In[67]:= Grid[Table[Binomial[n, k] - RascalNumber[n, k, 3], {n, 0, 20}, {k, 0, n}], Frame → All]
```

Out[67]=

k=4

A000332

n=8

0																				
0	0																			
0	0	0																		
0	0	0	0																	
0	0	0	0	0																
0	0	0	0	0	0															
0	0	0	0	0	0	0														
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0													
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0												
0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0											
0	0	0	0	15	26	15	0	0	0	0										
0	0	0	0	35	81	81	35	0	0	0	0									
0	0	0	0	70	196	262	196	70	0	0	0	0								
0	0	0	0	126	406	658	658	406	126	0	0	0	0							
0	0	0	0	210	756	1414	1716	1414	756	210	0	0	0	0						
0	0	0	0	330	1302	2730	3830	3830	2730	1302	330	0	0	0	0					
0	0	0	0	495	2112	4872	7680	8885	7680	4872	2112	495	0	0	0	0				
0	0	0	0	715	3267	8184	14 232	18 525	18 525	14 232	8184	3267	715	0	0	0	0			
0	0	0	0	1001	4862	13 101	24 816	35 697	40 186	35 697	24 816	13 101	4862	1001	0	0	0	0		
0	0	0	0	1365	7007	20 163	41 217	64 713	80 587	80 587	64 713	41 217	20 163	7007	1365	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	1820	9828	30 030	65 780	111 705	152 020	168 230	152 020	111 705	65 780	30 030	9828	1820	0	0	0	0

Figure 1. Difference $\binom{n}{k} - \binom{n}{k}_3$. Highlighted column is $\binom{n}{4}$. Sequence A000332 in OEIS [6].

We can spot that having $i = 3$ the $k = 4$-th column gives binomial coefficient $\binom{n}{4}$. Indeed, this rule is true for every i.

Proposition 2.4. *(Row-column difference.) For every fixed $i \geq 0$*

$$\binom{n+2i}{i} - \binom{n+2i}{i}_{i-1} = \binom{n+i}{i}$$

Proof. We have previously stated that iterated rascal number is closely related to Vandermonde convolution (2.2). Thus, proposition (2.4) can be rewritten as

$$\sum_{m=0}^{i} \binom{n+i}{m}\binom{i}{i-m} - \sum_{m=0}^{i-1} \binom{n+i}{m}\binom{i}{m}$$

Therefore, $\binom{n+2i}{i} - \binom{n+2i}{i}_{i-1} = \binom{n+i}{i}$ is indeed true. □

Proposition (2.4) yields to few more identities. Applying binomial coefficients symmetry

$$\binom{n+2i}{n+i} - \binom{n+2i}{n+i}_{i-1} = \binom{n+i}{n}$$

Taking $j = n+i$ gives

$$\binom{j+i}{j} - \binom{j+i}{j}_{i-1} = \binom{j}{j-i}$$

Proposition (2.4) can be generalized even further, for every fixed $i < k$.

Proposition 2.5. *(Binomial coefficient difference iterated rascal number.) For every fixed $i < k$*

$$\binom{n}{k} - \binom{n}{k}_i = \sum_{m=i+1}^{k} \binom{n-k}{m}\binom{k}{k-m}$$

Proof. It is true by means of Vandermonde convolution. □

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