

MATH 8803: Representation Theory II

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Lecture 1

Jan. 12 — Introduction and Review

1.1 Review and Overview

Remark. Recall that we are interested in representations of Lie groups G , which is closely related to representations of Lie algebras \mathfrak{g} .

We are primarily interested in semisimple Lie algebras. In this case, we fix a *Cartan subalgebra* $\mathfrak{h} \subseteq \mathfrak{g}$, where $r = \dim \mathfrak{h}$ is called the *rank*. We have the Serre generators $\{h_i, e_i, f_i\}_{i=1}^r$ and relations

$$[h_i, e_j] = a_{i,j} e_j, \quad [h_i, f_j] = a_{i,j} f_j, \quad \text{ad}_{e_i}^{1-a_{i,j}} e_j = 0, \quad \text{ad}_{f_i}^{1-a_{i,j}} f_j = 0,$$

where $a_{i,j} = \langle \alpha_i^\vee, \alpha_j \rangle$ for $\alpha_i^\vee = 2\alpha_i / (\alpha_i, \alpha_i)$. Here $\{\alpha_i\} \subseteq \mathfrak{h}^*$ and we identify $\alpha_i^\vee \leftrightarrow h_i \in \mathfrak{h}$. Then

$$\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{n}_+ \oplus \mathfrak{h} \oplus \mathfrak{n}_-,$$

where \mathfrak{n}_+ is generated by $\{e_i\}$ and \mathfrak{n}_- is generated by $\{f_i\}$. We also have

$$\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{h} \oplus \bigoplus_{\alpha \in R} \mathfrak{g}_\alpha,$$

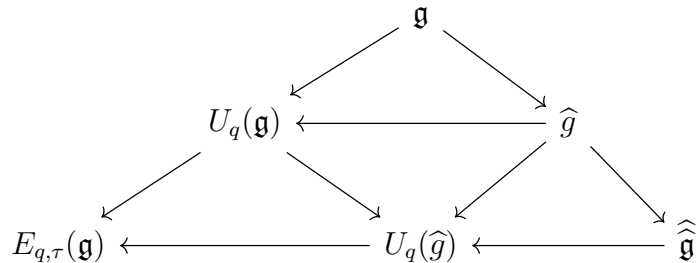
where $R = R_+ \sqcup R_-$. We have $R_+ \subseteq Q_+$ and $R_- \subseteq Q_-$, where $Q_+ = \{\sum_{i=1}^r n_i \alpha_i : n_i \geq 0\}$. If the $a_{i,j}$ are degenerate, then we can define $\widehat{\mathfrak{g}} = \mathfrak{g}[t, t^{-1}] \oplus \mathbb{C}c \oplus \mathbb{C}d$, where $\mathbb{C}c$ is called the *central extension* and $d = t \frac{d}{dt}$. We can think of these as maps $S^1 \rightarrow \mathfrak{g}$.

We can also consider the universal enveloping algebra $U(\mathfrak{g})$, and the related object. $U_q(\mathfrak{g})$ We have an R -matrix $R_{V,W}$ for the representations $V \otimes W$ and $W \otimes V$, and we have the relation

$$R_{1,2} R_{1,3} R_{2,3} = R_{2,3} R_{1,3} R_{1,2}$$

in $V_1 \otimes V_2 \otimes V_3$. A main goal later in the course will be to relate the representations of $U_q(\mathfrak{g})$ and $\widehat{\mathfrak{g}}$.

In this case, we have the diagram:



The object $U_q(\widehat{\mathfrak{g}})$ is related to quantum integrable models of spin chain type (XXX and XXZ), and $E_{q,\tau}(\mathfrak{g})$ is the *elliptic quantum group* (XYZ).

1.2 Representations of Semisimple Lie Algebras

Remark. Recall the *Weyl group* $W = \{s_\alpha(\lambda) = \lambda - \langle \lambda, \alpha^\vee \rangle \alpha\}$. The *weight lattice* is

$$P = \{\lambda \in E : \langle \lambda, \alpha^\vee \rangle \in \mathbb{Z}, \alpha \in R\} = \bigoplus_i \mathbb{Z}\omega_i,$$

where ω_i are the fundamental weights satisfying $\langle \omega_i, \alpha_j^\vee \rangle = \delta_{i,j}$.

We can consider the *highest weight representation*. The *Verma module* is $M_\lambda = U(\mathfrak{g}) \otimes_{U(\mathfrak{h} \oplus \mathfrak{n}_+)} \mathbb{C}_\lambda$, where \mathbb{C}_λ is the 1-dimensional representation of $U(\mathfrak{h} \oplus \mathfrak{n}_+)$ on which \mathfrak{h} acts by $\lambda(h)$. Then

$$P(M_\lambda) = \lambda - \mathbb{Q}_+,$$

and for each $\lambda \in \mathfrak{h}^*$, M_λ has a unique irreducible quotient L_λ . The *dominant integral weights* λ satisfy

$$\langle \lambda, \alpha_i^\vee \rangle \in \mathbb{Z}_+, \quad 1 \leq i \leq r,$$

where $\lambda = \sum_{i=1}^r n_i \omega_i$ with $n_i \in \mathbb{Z}_+$.

Theorem 1.1. *The finite-dimensional irreps of \mathfrak{g} are classified up to isomorphism by $\lambda \in P_+$. Moreover, $P(V)$ is Weyl invariant, and for any $\mu \in P(V)$, $w \in W$,*

$$\dim L_\lambda[\mu] = \dim L_\lambda[w\mu].$$

Example 1.0.1. For $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{sl}_2$, the dominant integral weights are $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$, $L_n = V_n$, and the Weyl group W acts by reflection.

Remark (Weyl character formula). Let $\chi_V(g) = \text{tr}_V(g)$. We can represent $g \sim e^h$, where $h \in \mathfrak{h}$. Then

$$\chi_V(e^h) = \sum_{\mu \in P} (\dim V(\mu)) e^{\mu(h)}.$$

We can then formally define $\chi_V = \sum_{\mu \in P} (\dim V(\mu)) e^\mu$. The *Weyl character formula* is

$$\chi_{L_\lambda} = \frac{\sum_{w \in W} (-1)^{\ell(w)} e^{w(\lambda + \rho)}}{\Delta},$$

where $\Delta = \prod_{\alpha \in R_+} (e^{\alpha/2} - e^{-\alpha/2}) = \prod_{w \in W} (-1)^{\ell(w)} e^{w\rho}$ is the *Weyl denominator*. Here $\rho = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\alpha \in R_+} \alpha = \sum_{i=1}^r w_i$. The *Weyl dimension formula* is then

$$\dim L_\lambda = \frac{\prod_{\alpha \in R_+} (\alpha, \lambda + \rho)}{\prod_{\alpha \in R_+} (\alpha, \rho)}.$$

Recall the *Casimir operator* $\sum_{i=1}^{\dim \mathfrak{g}} x_i x^i \in U(\mathfrak{g})$, which acts by the scalar $(\lambda, \lambda + 2\rho)$.

1.3 Representations of SL_n and GL_n

Proposition 1.1. *For general simple \mathfrak{g} , let $\lambda = \sum_{i=1}^r m_i \omega_i$ be a dominant integral weight. Let $T_\lambda = \bigotimes_i L_{\omega_i}^{\otimes m_i}$ and $v = \bigotimes_i v_{\omega_i}^{\otimes m_i}$. Let V be the subrepresentation of T_λ generated by v . Then $V \cong L_\lambda$.*

Remark. For \mathfrak{sl}_n , we have $\lambda = \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} m_i \omega_i$. The Cartan subalgebra is

$$\mathfrak{h} = \mathbb{C}_0^n = \{(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \mathbb{C}^n : x_1 + \dots + x_n = 0\}.$$

We have $\alpha_i^\vee = e_i - e_{i-1}$ and $\delta_{i,j} = (\omega_i, \alpha_j^\vee) = (\omega_i, e_j - e_{j+1})$, where $\omega_i = (1, \dots, 1, 0, \dots, 0)$ with i ones. We can associate λ with the partition

$$\lambda = (m_1 + \dots + m_{n-1}, m_2 + \dots + m_{n-1}, \dots, m_{n-1}, 0) = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_{n-1}, 0),$$

and $\lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_{n-1}$. Note that L_{ω_1} is the defining representation, where $v_{\omega_1} = (1, 0, \dots, 0)^T = v_1$, where $\{v_1, \dots, v_n\}$ is a basis of the defining representation. Then we have that $L_{\omega_m} = \wedge^m V$ with highest weight $v_1 \wedge \dots \wedge v_m$. Here $e_i = E_{i,i+1}$. Then we see that $L_\lambda \subseteq \bigotimes_{i=1}^{n-1} (\wedge^i V)^{\otimes m_i}$.

Remark. To move to GL_n , we can write

$$\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C}) = (\mathbb{C}^\times \times \mathrm{SL}_n(\mathbb{C})) / \mu_n,$$

where μ_n are the roots of unity embedded by $z \mapsto (z^{-1}, zI)$. We have a covering homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{C}^\times \times \mathrm{SL}_n(\mathbb{C}) &\longrightarrow \mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C}) \\ (z, A) &\longmapsto zA. \end{aligned}$$

We need to determine the holomorphic representations of \mathbb{C}^\times . Its Lie algebra is spanned by h such that $e^{2\pi i h} = 1$. Within a representation, h acts by an operator H such that $e^{2\pi i H} = 1$. Thus all irreducible representations of \mathbb{C}^\times are of the form $\chi_N(z) = z^N$. So for $\mathbb{C}^\times \times \mathrm{SL}_n(\mathbb{C})$, we have $L_{\lambda,N} = \chi_N \otimes L_\lambda$.

Exercise 1.1. Show that if $L_{\lambda,N} = \chi_N \otimes L_\lambda$, then $N = nr + \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \lambda_i$ for some integer r .

Remark. Letting $m_n = r \geq 0$ in the above exercise, the representation $L_{\lambda, nm_n + \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \lambda_i}$ for \mathfrak{gl}_n corresponds to the partition $(m_1 + \dots + m_n, \dots, m_{n-1} + m_n, m_n)$.

Remark. For SL_n , the representation $\wedge^n V$ is trivial, but it is the determinant for GL_n . For GL_n , we also have χ^k and $(\chi^*)^k = \chi^{-k}$, these are called the *polynomial representations*.

Remark. Let $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n)$ with $\lambda_i \geq \dots \geq \lambda_n$ be a partition with at most n parts. Then $|\lambda| = \sum_i \lambda_i$ is an eigenvalue of $1_n = \sum_{i=1}^n e_{i,i} \in \mathfrak{gl}_n$. We can realize λ as a Young diagram. Note that L_λ occurs in $V^{\otimes N}$, where V is the defining representation. We can decompose

$$V^{\otimes N} = \bigoplus_{\lambda: |\lambda|=N} L_\lambda \otimes \pi_\lambda,$$

where $\pi_\lambda = \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C})}(L_\lambda, V^{\otimes N})$. There is a natural action of S_N on $V^{\otimes N}$.

Theorem 1.2 (Schur-Weyl duality). *Let A be the image of $U(\mathfrak{gl}_n)$ in $\mathrm{End}(V^{\otimes N})$ and B be the image of $\mathbb{C}S_N$ in $\mathrm{End}(V^{\otimes N})$. Then*

1. *the centralizer of A is B and vice versa;*
2. *if λ has at most n parts, then the representation π_λ of B (and hence of S_N) is irreducible, and such representations are pairwise non-isomorphic;*
3. *if $\dim V \geq N$, then the π_λ exhaust all irreducible representations of S_N .*

Lecture 2

Jan. 14 — Applications of Schur-Weyl Duality

2.1 The Schur Functor

Remark. Let V be the defining representation for GL_n . Then

$$V^{\otimes N} = \bigoplus_{\lambda: |\lambda|=N} L_\lambda \otimes \pi_\lambda.$$

Recall that if $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n)$, then we have

$$\lambda_1 = m_1 + \dots + m_n, \quad \lambda_2 = m_2 + \dots + m_n, \quad \dots, \quad \lambda_n = m_n.$$

Definition 2.1. Suppose we are given the partition λ of N . The *Schur functor* S^λ is given by

$$S^\lambda V = \mathrm{Hom}_{S_N}(\pi_\lambda, V^{\otimes N})$$

for a vector space V . Note that this language, we have $V^{\otimes N} = \bigoplus_\lambda S^\lambda V \otimes \pi_\lambda$.

Example 2.1.1. Consider the following:

1. $S^{(n)}V = S^n V$, where (n) is the partition of n with a single part.
2. $S^{(1^n)}V = \wedge^n V$, where (1^n) is the partition of n with n parts equal to 1.
3. $V \otimes V = S^{(2)}V \otimes \mathbb{C}_+ \oplus S^{(1,1)}V \otimes \mathbb{C}_-$, where \mathbb{C}_2 acts trivially on \mathbb{C}_+ and by the sign on \mathbb{C}_- .
4. $V \otimes V \otimes V = S^{(3)}V \otimes \mathbb{C}_+ \oplus S^{(2,1)}V \otimes \mathbb{C}^2 \oplus S^{(1,1,1)}V \otimes \mathbb{C}_-$, where S_3 acts trivially on \mathbb{C}_+ and by sign on \mathbb{C}_- as before, and $\mathbb{C}^2 = \{(x, y, z) : x + y + z = 0\}$.

Note that $V \otimes V = S^2 V \oplus \wedge^2 V$, so $S^2 V \otimes V = S^3 V \oplus S^{(2,1)}V$ and $\wedge^2 V \otimes V = \wedge^3 V \oplus S^{(2,1)}V$.

Remark. Let $\dim V = N$ and λ have k parts. Recall that by the Weyl dimension formula,

$$\dim L_\lambda = \frac{\prod_{\alpha \in R_+} (\alpha, \lambda + \rho)}{\prod_{\alpha \in R_+} (\alpha, \rho)}.$$

We have $R_+ = \{\alpha_{i,j} = e_i - e_j : i < j\}$ and $\rho = \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \omega_i = (N-1, N-2, \dots, 1, 0)$ (recall that ω_i is i ones followed by zeros). Thus we see that

$$\dim S^\lambda V = \prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq N} \frac{\lambda_i - \lambda_j + j - i}{j - i} = \prod_{1 \leq i < j \leq k} \frac{\lambda_i - \lambda_j + j - i}{j - i} \prod_{1 \leq i < k < j \leq N} \frac{\lambda_i + j - i}{j - i}.$$

We can rewrite the second product as

$$\prod_{1 \leq k < j \leq N} \frac{\lambda_i + j - i}{j - i} = \prod_{i=1}^k \frac{(N+1-i) \cdots (N+\lambda_i-i)}{(k+1-i) \cdots (k+\lambda_i-i)}.$$

Proposition 2.1. *We have $\dim S^\lambda V = P_\lambda(N)$, where P_λ is a polynomial of degree $|\lambda|$ with rational coefficients and integer roots. The roots of P_λ are all integers from the interval $[1 - \lambda_1, k - 1]$ (occurring with multiplicities).*

Example 2.1.2. Let $P_n(N)$ correspond to $S^n V$. Then $\lambda_1 = n$ and $k = 1$, and

$$P_n(N) = \dim S^n V = \binom{N+n-1}{n}.$$

Similarly, one can see that

$$P_{1^n}(N) = \dim \wedge^n V = \binom{N}{n}.$$

One can also consider $P_{(a,b)}(N)$ corresponding to partitions with two parts. The values $P_{(a,n)}(N)$ are called the Narayana numbers, which are of use in combinatorics.

2.2 Invariant Theory

Remark. Let V be a finite-dimensional vector space and $\{T_i\} \in (V^*)^{\otimes m_i} \otimes V^{\otimes n_i}$ for $i = 1, \dots, k$. One would like to characterize *invariants* of such collections, i.e. polynomial functions $F(T_1, \dots, T_k)$ which are invariant under the action of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$.

One can think of such a tensor in $(V^*)^{\otimes m_i} \otimes V^{\otimes n_i}$ as a vertex with m_i incoming edges and n_i outgoing edges. Then constructing invariants $\{T_i\}$ reduces to studying graphs where T_i corresponds to a vertex v_i of the graph Γ . This allows us to assign to a given graph an invariant function F_Γ .

Theorem 2.1. *The functions F_Γ for various Γ span the space of invariant functions.*

Proof. We can view an invariant as an invariant element of the space $\bigotimes_{i=1}^k ((V^*)^{\otimes m_i} \otimes V^{\otimes n_i})$, which we can view as $\mathrm{End}_{\mathrm{GL}(n)}(V^{\otimes M}, V^{\otimes N})$, where $M = \sum d_i m_i$ (the number of incoming edges) and $N = \sum d_i n_i$ (the number of outgoing edges). Note that this space is empty when $M \neq N$, and the statement follows by Schur-Weyl duality when $M = N$. \square

Example 2.1.3. Let $m_i = n_i = 1$. Then T_1, \dots, T_k are matrices. Then the graph Γ must look like a cycle, hence the invariants are all of the form

$$F_{j_1, \dots, j_r}(T_1, \dots, T_k) = \mathrm{tr}(T_{j_1} \cdots T_{j_r}).$$

Note that these invariants are asymptotically algebraically independent (when V is large enough). In particular, if $P(T_1, \dots, T_k) = 0$ in all dimensions, then $\mathrm{tr}(P(T_1, \dots, T_k)T_{k+1}) = 0$, which cannot be true as the trace decomposes in terms of the F_{j_1, \dots, j_r} . (However, note that $[X, Y] = 0$ for 1×1 matrices and $[Z, [X, Y]^2] = 0$ for 2×2 matrices.) This also implies the uniqueness of the μ_n in the BCH formula:

$$\log(\exp(x) \exp(y)) = \sum_{n \geq 1} \frac{\mu_n(x, y)}{n!}.$$

2.3 Weyl Character Formula for GL_n

Remark (Weyl character formula for GL_n). Recall that Weyl's character formula gives

$$\chi_\lambda = \frac{\sum_{w \in W} (-1)^{\ell(w)} e^{w(\lambda + \rho)}}{\sum_{\alpha \in R_+} (e^{\alpha/2} - e^{-\alpha/2})}, \quad (*)$$

where the denominator is $\Delta = \prod_{\alpha \in R_+} (e^{\alpha/2} - e^{-\alpha/2}) = \prod_{w \in W} (-1)^{\ell(w)} e^{w(\rho)}$. Letting $\rho = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\alpha \in R_+} \alpha$,

$$\Delta = e^\rho \prod_{\alpha \in R_+} (1 - e^{-\alpha}) = x_1^{n-1} x_2^{n-2} \cdots x_n^0 \prod_{i < j} (1 - x_j/x_i),$$

where $\rho = (n-1, n-2, \dots, 1, 0)$ and $x_i = e^{e_i}$ (e.g. $x_1 = e^{(1,0,\dots,0)}$). After multiplying we get that

$$\Delta = \prod_{i < j} (x_i - x_j).$$

On the other hand, using $\Delta = \prod_{w \in W} (-1)^{\ell(w)} e^{w(\rho)}$, we have

$$\Delta = \sum_{w \in W} (-1)^{\ell(w)} e^{w(\rho)} = \sum_{s \in S_n} \text{sign}(s) x_{s(1)}^{n-1} \cdots x_{s(n)}^0.$$

Comparing these two formulas, we recover the formula for the Vandermonde determinant:

$$\det(\{x_j^{n-i}\}_{1 \leq i, j \leq n}) = \sum_{s \in S_n} \text{sign}(s) x_{s(1)}^{n-1} \cdots x_{s(n)}^0 = \prod_{i < j} (x_i - x_j).$$

Now applying this to the numerator of (*), we have

$$\sum_{w \in W} (-1)^{\ell(w)} e^{w(\lambda + \rho)} = \sum_{s \in S_n} \text{sign}(s) x_{s(1)}^{\lambda_1 + n - 1} \cdots x_{s(n)}^{\lambda_n + 0}.$$

Thus in total, the character χ_λ is given by

$$\chi_\lambda = \frac{\sum_{s \in S_n} \text{sign}(s) x_{s(1)}^{\lambda_1 + n - 1} \cdots x_{s(n)}^{\lambda_n + 0}}{\prod_{i < j} (x_i - x_j)} = \frac{\det(\{x_i^{\lambda_j + n - i}\})}{\prod_{i < j} (x_i - x_j)}.$$

These functions are known as the *Schur polynomials* $s_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_n)$.

Example 2.1.4 (Character of $S^{(n)}V$). Using the above formula, we get the identity

$$s_{(m)}(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \sum_{1 \leq j_1 \leq \dots \leq j_m \leq n} x_{j_1} \cdots x_{j_m} = h_m(x_1, \dots, x_n),$$

the m th complete symmetric function.

Example 2.1.5 (Character of $\lambda^n V$). Similarly, one gets the identity

$$s_{(1^m)}(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \sum_{1 \leq j_1 < \dots < j_m \leq n} x_{j_1} \cdots x_{j_m} = e_m(x_1, \dots, x_n),$$

the m th elementary symmetric function.

Example 2.1.6 (Trace in $V^{\otimes N}$). Consider $x \otimes \sigma$, where $x = \text{diag}(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ and σ has m_i cycles of length i . Then we have

$$\text{tr}_{V^{\otimes N}}(x \otimes \sigma) = \prod_i (x_1^i + \dots + x_n^i)^{m_i}.$$

By Schur-Weyl duality, we have that

$$\text{tr}_{V^{\otimes N}}(x \otimes \sigma) = \sum_{\lambda} \chi_{\lambda}(\sigma) s_{\lambda}(x) = \prod_i (x_1^i + \dots + x_n^i)^{m_i}.$$

Using the formula for the Schur polynomial, we get the identity

$$\sum_{\lambda} \chi_{\lambda}(\sigma) \det(\{x_i^{\lambda_j + N - j}\}) = \prod_{i < j} (x_i - x_j) \prod_i (x_1^i + \dots + x_n^i)^{m_i}.$$

Theorem 2.2 (Frobenius character formula). $\chi_{\lambda}(\sigma)$ is the coefficient of $x_1^{\lambda_1 + N - 1} \dots x_N^{\lambda_N}$ in the polynomial

$$\prod_{i < j} (x_i - x_j) \prod_i (x_1^i + \dots + x_n^i)^{m_i}.$$

2.4 Howe Duality

Remark. Fix V, W and consider $S^n(V \otimes W)$, which is a representation of $\text{GL}(V) \otimes \text{GL}(W)$.

Theorem 2.3 (Howe duality). *We have a decomposition*

$$S^n(V \otimes W) = \bigoplus_{\lambda: |\lambda|=n} S^{\lambda}V \otimes S^{\lambda}W.$$

Proof. We can write

$$S^n(V \otimes W) = ((V \otimes W)^{\otimes n})^{S_n} = (V^{\otimes n} \otimes W^{\otimes n})^{S_n}.$$

Using Schur-Weyl duality for each part, we get that

$$\begin{aligned} S^n(V \otimes W) &= \left(\left(\bigoplus_{\lambda: |\lambda|=n} S^{\lambda}V \otimes \pi_{\lambda} \right) \otimes \left(\bigoplus_{\mu: |\mu|=n} S^{\mu}W \otimes \pi_{\mu} \right) \right)^{S_n} \\ &= \bigoplus_{\lambda, \mu: |\lambda|=|\mu|=n} S^{\lambda}V \otimes S^{\mu}W \otimes (\pi_{\lambda} \otimes \pi_{\mu})^{S_n}. \end{aligned}$$

Since $\pi_{\lambda} = \pi_{\lambda}^*$, by Schur's lemma we have $(\pi_{\lambda} \otimes \pi_{\mu})^{S_n} = \mathbb{C}^{\delta_{\lambda, \mu}}$. □

Corollary 2.3.1 (Cauchy identity). *Let $x = (x_1, \dots, x_r)$ and $y = (y_1, \dots, y_s)$. Then*

$$\sum_{\lambda} s_{\lambda}(x) s_{\lambda}(y) z^{|\lambda|} = \prod_{i=1}^r \prod_{j=1}^s \frac{1}{1 - z x_i y_j}.$$