On some properties of quantum doubles of finite groups

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ON SOME PROPERTIES OF QUANTUM DOUBLES OF FINITE GROUPS

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1. Introduction

In this paper we prove two results about quantum doubles of finite groups over the complex field. The first result is the integrality theorem for higher Frobenius-Schur indicators for wreath product groups $S_N \ltimes A^N$, where $A$ is a finite abelian group. A proof of this result for $A = 1$ appears in [IMM]. The second result is a lower bound for the largest possible number of irreducible representations of the quantum double of a finite group with $\leq n$ conjugacy classes. This answers a question asked to me by Eric Rowell.

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2. Integrality of higher Frobenius-Schur indicators for the quantum doubles of wreath product groups $S_N \ltimes A^N$

2.1. The result. Let $H$ be a semisimple Hopf algebra over $\mathbb{C}$, and $\Lambda$ a left integral of $H$ such that $\varepsilon(\Lambda) = 1$. Let $V$ be an irreducible $H$-module. Then the higher Frobenius-Schur indicators $\nu_n(V)$ are defined by the formula ([KSZ]):

$$\nu_n(V) = \text{Tr}_V(\Lambda_1...\Lambda_n),$$

where $\Lambda_1 \otimes ... \otimes \Lambda_n = \Delta_n(\Lambda)$ (using Sweedler’s notation with implied summation). These are algebraic integers lying in $\mathbb{Q}(e^{2\pi i/n})$, which are known to be integers if $H$ is a group algebra.

An interesting question is when $\nu_n(V)$ are integers.

Here we prove the following theorem.

Let $A$ be a finite abelian group.

Theorem 2.1. For any $N$ and any irreducible representation $V$ of the quantum double $D(S_N \ltimes A^N)$, the higher Frobenius-Schur indicators $\nu_n(V)$ are integers.

In the case $A = 1$, a proof of this theorem appears in [IMM].

Remark. For basics on the quantum double, see [Ka], Section IX.

2.2. Proof of Theorem 2.1. Let us start with deriving an explicit formula for $\nu_n(V)$ (which is well known to experts, see e.g. [KSZ]). Let $G$ be a finite group. For $D(G)$, one has

$$\Lambda = |G|^{-1} \sum_{g \in G} g \delta_1,$$

where $\delta_g(x) := 1$ if $g = x$ and $\delta_g(x) = 0$ otherwise. So

$$\Lambda_1...\Lambda_n = |G|^{-1} \sum_{g} \sum_{x_1...x_n=1} g \delta_{x_1} g \delta_{x_2}...g \delta_{x_n} = |G|^{-1} \sum_{g} \sum_{x_1...x_n=1} g^n \delta_{g^{x_1}} g^{x_1}...\delta_{x_n} =$$
Thus,

$$\nu_n(V) = |G|^{-1} \sum_{g \in G} \sum_{y : g^n = (y^{-1}g)^n} g^n \delta_y.$$ 

Let us now recall the structure of irreducible representations of $D(G)$. Such a representation $V$ is attached to a conjugacy class $C$ in $G$ and an irreducible representation $W$ of the centralizer $Z_y$ of an element $y \in C$, and has the form $V = \oplus_{u \in C} V_u$, where $V_u = \delta_u V$, and $V_y = W$. So the formula for $\nu_n$ can be rewritten as

$$\nu_n(V) = |G|^{-1} \sum_{u \in C} \sum_{g \in G : g^n = (u^{-1}g)^n} \text{Tr}_{V_u}(g^n).$$

(note that $g^n$ is automatically in $Z_u$ as it commutes with $g$ and $u^{-1}g$). It is clear that the summands corresponding to all $u \in C$ are the same, so we get

$$\nu_n(V) = \frac{|C|}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G : g^n = (y^{-1}g)^n} \text{Tr}_W(g^n) = \frac{|C|}{|G|} \sum_{g, h \in G : g^n = h^n, gh^{-1} = y} \text{Tr}_W(g^n).$$

Let us multiply this formula by $\text{Tr}_{W^*}(z)$ and sum over $W$. To keep track of the dependence on $W$, we will write $V(W)$ instead of $V$. By orthogonality of characters, we get

$$\sum_{W \in \text{irr} Z_y} \nu_n(V(W)) \text{Tr}_{W^*}(z) = #\{(g, h) \in G^2 : g^n = h^n = z, gh^{-1} = y\}.$$ 

Thus, we see that integrality of $\nu_n(V)$ for all $V$ is equivalent to the statement that for any $y$ the function $f_y : Z_y \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ given by the formula

$$f_y(z) = #\{(g, h) \in G^2 : g^n = h^n = z, gh^{-1} = y\}$$

is a virtual character of $Z_y$. This, in turn, is equivalent to saying that for any $s$ which is coprime to $|G|$, one has $f_y(z) = f_y(z^s)$.

So the theorem follows from the following proposition.

**Proposition 2.2.** Let $G = S_N \ltimes A^N$. Then for any $s$ which is coprime to $|G|$, one has $f_y(z) = f_y(z^s)$.

The rest of the subsection is the proof of this proposition.

First of all, $g, h, y$ commute with $z$. So if we write $z$ as $(z_1, ..., z_q)$ where $z_j$ comprises all cycles of a fixed type in $z$ (i.e. fixed length and monodromy), then we’ll get $g = (g_1, ..., g_q)$, $h = (h_1, ..., h_q)$, $y = (y_1, ..., y_q)$ accordingly (where $g_j, h_j, y_j$ are some elements commuting with $z_j$). Thus, $f_y(z) = f_{g_1}(z_1) ... f_{g_q}(z_q)$. This shows that we may assume that $z$ has only cycles of some fixed length $m$ with fixed monodromy $u \in A$.

So we can assume that $N = mr$ and $z = (c, c, ..., c) \in (S_m \ltimes A^m)^r \subset G$, where $c = (12...m)(u, 0, ..., 0)$. In this case, the centralizer $Z_z$ is $S_r \ltimes B^r$, where $B$ is the central extension of $\mathbb{Z}/m\mathbb{Z}$ by $A$ which is generated in $S_m \ltimes A^m$ by $c$ and the diagonal copy of $A$. So we have $g = (a_1, ..., a_r)$, $h = (b_1, ..., b_r)$. $y = \sigma \cdot (k_{\theta^{-1}(1)}, ..., k_{\theta^{-1}(r)})$, for $\tau, \theta \in S_r \subset S_m$.

If $z = c \cdot (a_1, ..., a_n) \in S_n \ltimes A^n$, where $c$ is a cycle of length $n$ and $a_i \in A$, then by the monodromy of $z$ we mean the element $a_1...a_n$ in $A$. It is invariant with respect to conjugation.
(diagonal copy in $S'^n_m \subseteq S_{mr}$), $\sigma = \tau \theta^{-1}$, and $a_i, b_i, k_i \in B$. Then the equation $gh^{-1} = y$ says that

\[(2.3) \quad a_j - b_j = k_j,\]

and the equations $g^n = h^n = z^s$ say that $\tau^n = \theta^n = 1$ (so all the cycles of $\tau$ and $\theta$ have lengths dividing $n$), and for any cycle $K = (i_1, ..., i_{d(K)})$ of $\tau$, one has

\[(2.4) \quad \frac{n}{d(K)}(a_{i_1} + ... + a_{i_{d(K)}}) = sc,\]

while for any cycle $K = (j_1, ..., j_{d(K)})$ of $\theta$, one has

\[(2.5) \quad \frac{n}{d(K)}(b_{j_1} + ... + b_{j_{d(K)}}) = sc.\]

Let $\ell$ be the least common multiple of $n/d(K)$ for all cycles $K$. If equations (2.4), (2.5) have a solution, then $c = \ell \overline{c}$ for some (possibly non-unique) $\overline{c} \in B$.

Thus, equations (2.4) and (2.5) can be rewritten as

\[(2.6) \quad a_i + ... + a_{i_{d(K)}} = \frac{s \ell d(K)}{n} \overline{c} + v(K), \quad \frac{n}{d(K)}v(K) = 0\]

for any cycle $K = (i_1, ..., i_{d(K)})$ of $\tau$, and

\[(2.7) \quad b_j + ... + b_{j_{d(K)}} = \frac{s \ell d(K)}{n} \overline{c} + v(K), \quad \frac{n}{d(K)}v(K) = 0\]

for any cycle $K = (j_1, ..., j_{d(K)})$ of $\theta$.

We can eliminate $a_j$ by setting $a_j = b_j + k_j$, so we get:

\[(2.8) \quad b_{i_1} + ... + b_{i_{d(K)}} = k_{i_1} + ... + k_{i_{d(K)}} + \frac{s \ell d(K)}{n} \overline{c} + v(K), \quad \frac{n}{d(K)}v(K) = 0\]

for any cycle $K = (i_1, ..., i_{d(K)})$ of $\tau$, and

\[(2.9) \quad b_{j_1} + ... + b_{j_{d(K)}} = \frac{s \ell d(K)}{n} \overline{c} + v(K), \quad \frac{n}{d(K)}v(K) = 0\]

for any cycle $K = (j_1, ..., j_{d(K)})$ of $\theta$.

For given $\tau, \theta$, equations (2.3), (2.8), (2.9) are linear inhomogeneous equations in $b_j, v(K)$, whose associated homogeneous equations don’t depend on $s$. So the number of solutions, if it is not zero, does not depend on $s$, and our job is just to show that the solvability of equations (2.3), (2.8), (2.9) does not depend on $s$.

Now we will need the following (well known) lemma.

**Lemma 2.10.** Let $B$ be a finite abelian group. Let $P = (P_i, 1 \leq i \leq l_P)$ and $Q = (Q_j, 1 \leq j \leq l_Q)$ be two set partitions of $\{1, ..., r\}$. Let $p_i, 1 \leq i \leq l_P, q_j, j = 1, ..., l_Q$ be elements of $B$. Then the system of equations

$$\sum_{k \in P_i} b_k = p_i, 1 \leq i \leq l_P; \quad \sum_{k \in Q_j} b_k = q_j, 1 \leq j \leq l_Q;$$
has a solution \((b_1, \ldots, b_r) \in B^r\) if and only if for every subset \(S \subset \{1, \ldots, r\}\) compatible with both \(P\) and \(Q\), one has

\[
\sum_{i: P \subset S} p_i = \sum_{j: Q \subset S} q_j.
\]

**Proof.** Clearly, the condition is necessary, since both sides equal \(\sum_{i \in S} b_i\). For sufficiency, it suffices to consider the case when \((P, Q)\) is indecomposable, i.e. any nonempty \(S\) is the whole \(\{1, \ldots, r\}\). In this case, we just have one equation

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{l_P} p_i = \sum_{j=1}^{l_Q} q_j.
\]

Let \(1_S\) be the characteristic function of a subset \(S\). Our job is to show that if \(a_i, b_j \in B^*\) are such that

\[
\sum a_i 1_{P_i} = \sum b_j 1_{Q_j},
\]

then \(a_i = b_j = \phi\) for some \(\phi \in B^*\) and all \(i, j\).

To this end, let \(f = \sum a_i 1_{P_i} - \sum b_j 1_{Q_j}\). Then \(f(x) = a_{i(x)} - b_{j(x)}\), where \(x \in P_{i(x)}\) and \(x \in Q_{j(x)}\). So if \(f = 0\) then \(a_{i(x)} = b_{j(x)}\). Consider the bipartite graph with vertices \(i\) and \(j\), where \(i\) is connected to \(j\) if \(P_i \cap Q_j \neq \emptyset\). Since \((P, Q)\) is indecomposable, this graph is connected. So we see that if \(f = 0\) then \(a_i = b_j = \phi\) for all \(i, j\), as desired. \(\square\)

Now, the lemma easily implies the proposition. Indeed, let \(P, Q\) be the partitions of \(\{1, \ldots, r\}\) into cycles of \(\tau\) and \(\theta\). Then the lemma implies that the condition of solvability of equations \((2.3), (2.8), (2.9)\) in \(b_i\) is a system of linear equations in the variables \(v(K)\), which is independent on \(s\), as desired (the terms which depend on \(s\) cancel).

3. **Bounds on the number of irreducible representations of the quantum double of a finite group**

3.1. **The result.** The goal of this section is to establish bounds for the number of irreducible representations of the quantum double of a finite group, answering a question asked to me by E. Rowell.

Let \(f(n)\) be the maximal number of irreducible representations of the quantum double \(D(G)\) (over \(\mathbb{C}\)) of a finite group \(G\) with \(\leq n\) conjugacy classes (or, equivalently, irreducible representations). Note that \(f(n)\) is well defined since by Landau’s theorem (1903), the set of such groups is finite.

**Theorem 3.1.** There are positive constants \(C_1, C_2\) such that

\[
C_1 n^{1/3} \log(n) \leq \log f(n) \leq C_2 n \log^7(n).
\]

The proof, given in the next subsections, readily follows from the results in the literature.

**Remark.** We don’t know if the upper bound holds for semisimple Hopf algebras or fusion categories.

3.2. **The upper bound.** By a result of Pyber [P] improved by Keller [K], there is \(C > 0\) such that \(n \geq C \log |G|/(\log \log |G|)^7\). for sufficiently large \(n\). On the other hand, \(f(n) \leq |G|^2\). This implies the statement.
3.3. **The lower bound.** Let $p$ be a prime. Consider the group $G$ of changes of variable $x \to x + a_2x^2 + \ldots + a_{p+1}x^{p+1}$ modulo $x^{p+2}$ (this kind of groups is considered in [KLG]).

This is a nilpotent group of order $p^p$, so its exponential and logarithm map are well defined, and $\text{Lie}(G)$ is the Lie algebra spanned over $\mathbb{F}_p$ by vector fields $L_i := x^{i+1}\partial_x$, $i = 1, \ldots, p$, with commutator modulo $x^{p+2}$ (so we have $[L_i, L_j] = (j - i)L_{i+j}$, where $L_k := 0$ if $k > p$).

Conjugacy classes correspond to adjoint orbits in this Lie algebra, which are easily seen to be the orbit of 0 and the orbits of $aL_i + bL_{2i}$, where $a \neq 0$, and $i$ runs from 1 to $p$. So the number of conjugacy classes of $G$ is $\leq p^3$.

On the other hand, consider the representations of $D(G)$. They are parametrized by conjugacy classes of $G$ and irreducible representations of centralizers $Z_g$. Take the conjugacy class of $g = \exp(L_{(p+1)/2})$. Then $\text{Lie}(Z_g)$ is spanned by $L_{(p+1)/2}, \ldots, L_p$, which commute, so $Z_g$ is a vector space over $\mathbb{F}_p$ of dimension $(p+1)/2$. This group has $p^{p+1}$ irreducible representations. So we see that $\log f(p^3) \geq \frac{p+1}{2} \log p$.

Now for large $n$, find a prime $p$ such that $\frac{1}{2}n^{1/3} \leq p \leq n^{1/3}$. Then since by definition $f$ is increasing, we find that $\log f(n) \geq C_1n^{1/3}\log(n)$ for some constant $C_1$, as desired.

**References**


