

Twisted conjugacy for free groups and the conjugacy problem for some extensions of groups

Enric Ventura

Departament de Matemàtica Aplicada III
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

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Outline

- 1 The twisted conjugacy problem
- 2 The conjugacy problem for free-by-cyclic groups
- 3 The main theorem
- 4 The conjugacy problem for free-by-free groups
- 5 The conjugacy problem for (free abelian)-by-free groups

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- 5 The conjugacy problem for (free abelian)-by-free groups

Notation

- $A = \{a_1, \dots, a_n\}$ is a finite alphabet (n letters).
- $A^{\pm 1} = A \cup A^{-1} = \{a_1, a_1^{-1}, \dots, a_n, a_n^{-1}\}$.
- F_n is the free group on A .
- $\text{Aut}(F_n) \subseteq \text{End}(F_n)$.
- I let endomorphisms $\varphi: F_n \rightarrow F_n$ act on the right, $x \mapsto x\varphi$.
- So, compositions are $\alpha\beta: F_n \xrightarrow{\alpha} F_n \xrightarrow{\beta} F_n, x \mapsto x\alpha \mapsto x\alpha\beta$.
- conjugations: $\gamma_u: F_n \rightarrow F_n, x \mapsto u^{-1}xu$.
- $\text{Fix}(\phi) = \{x \in F_n \mid x\phi = x\} \leq F_n$.

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Two elements $u, v \in G$ are said to be *conjugated*, denoted $u \sim v$, if $v = g^{-1}ug$ for some $g \in G$.

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The *conjugacy problem* for G , denoted $CP(G)$: "Given $u, v \in G$ decide whether $u \sim v$ ".

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For $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(G)$, two elements $u, v \in G$ are said to be *φ -twisted conjugated*, denoted $u \sim_{\varphi} v$, if $v = (g\varphi)^{-1}ug$ for some $g \in G$.

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Not much is known about twisted conjugacy problem:

Theorem

Every finitely generated, virtually

- (i) abelian, or*
- (ii) free, or*
- (iii) surface, or*
- (iv) polycyclic*

group has solvable twisted conjugacy problem.

Theorem (work in progress)

- *(w. J.Burillo & F.Matuucci) Thomson's group has solvable TCP,*
- *(w. J.González-Meneses) Braid group has solvable TCP,*
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Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

Let G be a group (given as a finite presentation) and $K \leq G$ a finite index subgroup (given by generators). Then,

- if K is characteristic and $TCP(K)$ is solvable, then $TCP(G)$ is solvable,
- if K is normal and $TCP(K)$ is solvable, then $CP(G)$ is solvable.

Corollary (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

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Two automorphisms $\alpha, \beta \in \text{Aut}(G)$ are *isogradient*, denoted $\alpha \approx \beta$, if they are *conjugated by a conjugation*, i.e. $\exists g \in G$ such that

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G & \xrightarrow{\gamma_g} & G \\ \alpha \downarrow & \equiv & \downarrow \beta \\ G & \xrightarrow{\gamma_g} & G \end{array}$$

Observation

If G has trivial center, then

$$u \sim_{\varphi} v \Leftrightarrow \varphi \gamma_u \approx \varphi \gamma_v \Leftrightarrow \exists g \in G \text{ s.t. } \begin{array}{ccc} G & \xrightarrow{\gamma_g} & G \\ \varphi \gamma_u \downarrow & \equiv & \downarrow \varphi \gamma_v \\ G & \xrightarrow{\gamma_g} & G \end{array}$$

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$TCP(F_n)$ is solvable.

Proof.

- $\varphi\gamma_u \approx \varphi\gamma_v \implies (\text{Fix } \varphi\gamma_u)\gamma_g = \text{Fix } \varphi\gamma_v$.
- The convers is not true in general, but...

- In the diagram

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a) $x(\varphi\gamma_u)\gamma_g = x\gamma_g(\varphi\gamma_v) \iff x\varphi \in C(v^{-1}(g\varphi)^{-1}ug)$;

b) $\{x \in F_n \mid x(\varphi\gamma_u)\gamma_g = x\gamma_g(\varphi\gamma_v)\}$ is either cyclic, or the whole F_n .

- So, $\varphi\gamma_u \approx \varphi\gamma_v \iff (\text{Fix } \varphi\gamma_u)\gamma_g = \text{Fix } \varphi\gamma_v$ plus rank ≥ 2 .

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Idea is to **force** the diagram to commute.

- Extend to $F_n * \langle z \rangle$ and $\hat{\varphi}: F_n * \langle z \rangle \rightarrow F_n * \langle z \rangle$, sending z to uzu^{-1} .
- Now, if $z\gamma_g \in \text{Fix}(\hat{\varphi}\gamma_v) \Rightarrow z$ commutes in the diagram .
 - $\Rightarrow z \in C(v^{-1}(g\varphi)^{-1}ug)$
 - $\Rightarrow v^{-1}(g\varphi)^{-1}ug = 1$
 - $\Rightarrow u \sim_{\varphi} v$
- Hence, $u \sim_{\varphi} v \iff z\gamma_g \in \text{Fix}(\hat{\varphi}\gamma_v)$ for some $g \in F_n$.

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- Extend to $F_n * \langle z \rangle$ and $\hat{\varphi}: F_n * \langle z \rangle \rightarrow F_n * \langle z \rangle$, sending z to uzu^{-1} .
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Outline

- 1 The twisted conjugacy problem
- 2 The conjugacy problem for free-by-cyclic groups
- 3 The main theorem
- 4 The conjugacy problem for free-by-free groups
- 5 The conjugacy problem for (free abelian)-by-free groups

Definition

Let $F_n = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n \mid \rangle$ be a free group on $\{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ ($n \geq 2$), and let $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$. The **free-by-cyclic** group $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z}$ is defined as

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Move t 's to left & get usual **normal forms**, $t^r w$, with $r \in \mathbb{Z}$, $w \in F_n$.

Example

Consider $F_3 = \langle a, b, c \mid \rangle$ and $\varphi: F_3 \rightarrow F_3$ given by $a \mapsto a$, $b \mapsto ba$, $c \mapsto b^{-2}cba$. In $F_3 \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z}$ we have

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Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

For every $\varphi \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$, $CP(F_n \rtimes_{\varphi} \mathbb{Z})$ is solvable.

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- Still infinitely many k 's:

$$u \text{ and } v \text{ conj. in } M_\varphi \iff v \sim u\varphi^k \text{ for some } k \in \mathbb{Z}.$$

- This is precisely Brinkmann's result:

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- 3 The main theorem**
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- 5 The conjugacy problem for (free abelian)-by-free groups

Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-V., 2008)

Let

$$1 \longrightarrow F \xrightarrow{\alpha} G \xrightarrow{\beta} H \longrightarrow 1$$

be an algorithmic short exact sequence of groups such that

- (i) $TCP(F)$ is solvable,
- (ii) $CP(H)$ is solvable, and
- (iii) there is an algorithm which, given an input $1 \neq h \in H$, computes a finite set of elements $z_{h,1}, \dots, z_{h,t_h} \in H$ such that

$$C_H(h) = \langle h \rangle_{z_{h,1}} \sqcup \dots \sqcup \langle h \rangle_{z_{h,t_h}}.$$

Then,

$$CP(G) \text{ is solvable} \iff A_G = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \gamma_g: F \rightarrow F \\ x \mapsto g^{-1}xg \end{array} \middle| g \in G \right\}$$

$\leq Aut(F)$ is orbit decidable.

Definition

A subgroup $A \leq \text{Aut}(F)$ is said to be *orbit decidable (O.D.)* if \exists an algorithm s.t., given $u, v \in F$ decides whether $v \sim u\alpha$ for some $\alpha \in A$.

Previous result in this language:

Theorem (Brinkmann, 2006)

Cyclic subgroups of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ are O.D.

Corollary (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

Free-by-cyclic groups have solvable conjugacy problem.

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Let $F_n = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n \mid \rangle$ be the free group on $\{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ ($n \geq 2$), and let $\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$. The **free-by-free** group $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m$ is

$$F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m = \langle x_1, \dots, x_n, t_1, \dots, t_m \mid t_j^{-1} x_i t_j = x_i \varphi_j \rangle.$$

And this sequence satisfies (i), (ii) and (iii):

$$1 \longrightarrow F_n \longrightarrow F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m \longrightarrow F_m \longrightarrow 1$$

So,

$$CP(F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m) \text{ is solvable} \Leftrightarrow \langle \varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m \rangle \leq \text{Aut}(F_n) \text{ is O.D.}$$

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Theorem (Brinkmann, 2006)

Cyclic subgroups of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ are O.D.

Corollary (Bogopolski-Martino-Maslakova-V., 2005)

Free-by-cyclic groups have solvable conjugacy problem.

Theorem (Whitehead)

The full $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ is O.D.

Corollary

If $\langle \varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m \rangle = \text{Aut}(F_n)$ then $F_n \rtimes_{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_m} F_m$ has solvable conjugacy problem.

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Theorem (Bogopolski-Martino-V., 2008)

Every finitely generated subgroup of $\text{Aut}(F_2)$ is O.D.

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There are free-by-free groups with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

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Theorem (linear algebra)

Cyclic subgroups of $GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ are O.D.

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\mathbb{Z}^n -by- \mathbb{Z} groups have solvable conjugacy problem.

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The full $GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ is O.D.

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There are exist 14 matrices $M_1, \dots, M_{14} \in GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$, for $n \geq 4$, such that $\langle M_1, \dots, M_{14} \rangle \leq GL_n(\mathbb{Z})$ is orbit undecidable.

Corollary

There exists a \mathbb{Z}^4 -by- F_{14} group with unsolvable conjugacy problem.

Question

Does $GL_3(\mathbb{Z})$ contain orbit undecidable subgroups ?

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