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Newton polytope of good symmetric polynomials

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Abstract. We introduce a general class of symmetric polynomials that have saturated Newton polytope and their Newton polytope has integer decomposition property. The class covers numerous previously studied symmetric polynomials.

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1. Introduction

In combinatorics, if a convex polytope equals the convex hull of its integer points, we say that it is a lattice polytope. Studying lattice polytopes is important because of their connections in many other domains. For instance, in mathematical optimization, if a system of linear inequalities defines a polytope, then we can use linear programming to solve integer programming problems for this system (see [1]). In algebraic geometry, lattice polytopes are used to study projective toric varieties (see [4, 7]). The Newton polytope is a lattice polytope associated with a polynomial: it is the convex hull of exponent vectors. The Newton polytope is a central object in tropical geometry (see [9]), and they are used to characterizing Grobner bases (see [22]).

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Lattice polytopes are studied by Ehrhart polynomials (see [6]). Important properties of Ehrhart polynomials such as unimodality and log-concavity are related to the integer decomposition property (IDP) of the lattice polytope (see [3, 13, 15]). In [2], the authors studied the Newton polytope of inflated symmetric Grothendieck polynomials. The saturated property (SNP) of inflated symmetric Grothendieck polynomials in [2] generalizes the SNP of symmetric Grothendieck polynomials in [5]. The SNP of the inflated symmetric Grothendieck polynomials is an important point to derive the IDP of their Newton polytope.

In this paper, we introduce a general class of symmetric polynomials that has SNP with Newton polytope has IDP (see Theorem 7 and Corollary 8). Our class covers symmetric polynomials in [2, 5, 11, 12]: symmetric Grothendieck polynomials, inflated symmetric Grothendieck polynomials, Stembridge’s symmetric polynomials associated with totally nonnegative matrices, cycle index polynomials, Reutenauer’s symmetric polynomials, Schur P -polynomials and Schur Q -polynomials, Stanley’s symmetric polynomials, chromatic symmetric polynomials of co-bipartite graphs, indifference graphs of Dyck paths, incomparability graphs of $(3+1)$ -free posets. It also covers other symmetric polynomials, for instance, dual Grothendieck polynomials in [10].

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2. Newton polytope

A polytope \mathcal{P} in \mathbb{R}^m is the convex hull $\text{Conv}(v_1, \dots, v_k)$ of finite many points $v_1, \dots, v_k \in \mathbb{R}^m$. The vertex set of \mathcal{P} is the minimal set V in \mathbb{R}^m such that $\mathcal{P} = \text{Conv}(V)$. Algebraically, a point $v \in \mathcal{P}$ is a vertex if, $v = tw + (1 - t)u$ for some $w, u \in \mathcal{P}$, $t \in (0, 1)$ implies $w = u = v$. We say that \mathcal{P} is a lattice polytope if V is a subset of \mathbb{Z}^m .

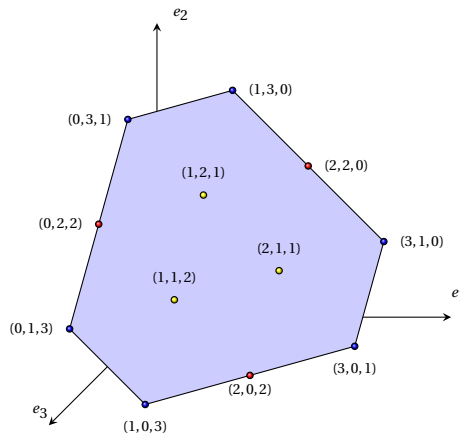
Example 1. The convex hull \mathcal{P} of twelve points in \mathbb{R}^3 below is a lattice polytope.

$$(3, 1, 0), (3, 0, 1), (1, 0, 3), (0, 1, 3), (0, 3, 1), (1, 3, 0),$$

$$(2, 2, 0), (2, 0, 2), (0, 2, 2),$$

$$(2, 1, 1), (1, 1, 2), (1, 2, 1).$$

The permutations of $(3, 1, 0)$ are vertices of the polytope \mathcal{P} . In the picture below, \mathcal{P} is the blue hexagon.



Let \mathcal{P} be a lattice polytope. For a positive integer t , let $t\mathcal{P} = \{tv \mid v \in \mathcal{P}\}$. We say that \mathcal{P} has *integer decomposition property (IDP)* if, for any positive integer t and $p \in t\mathcal{P} \cap \mathbb{Z}^m$, there are t points $v_1, \dots, v_t \in \mathcal{P} \cap \mathbb{Z}^m$ such that $p = v_1 + \dots + v_t$.

Example 2. Let \mathcal{P} be the lattice polytope in Example 1. It is known that \mathcal{P} has IDP ([2, Proposition 11]). For instance, $3\mathcal{P}$ is the convex hull of six points

$$(9, 3, 0), (9, 0, 3), (3, 0, 9), (0, 3, 9), (0, 9, 3), (3, 9, 0).$$

We see that $(9, 2, 1) \in 3\mathcal{P} \cap \mathbb{Z}^3$ and is the sum of three points in $\mathcal{P} \cap \mathbb{Z}^3$.

$$(9, 2, 1) = (3, 1, 0) + (3, 1, 0) + (3, 0, 1).$$

Example 3. Let \mathcal{G} be convex hull of four points

$$(0, 0, 0), (1, 0, 0), (0, 0, 1), (1, 2, 1).$$

The elements in $\mathcal{G} \cap \mathbb{Z}^3$ are

$$(0, 0, 0), (1, 0, 0), (0, 0, 1), (1, 2, 1).$$

We have $(1, 1, 1) \in 2\mathcal{G} \cap \mathbb{Z}^3$, but it can not be written as a sum of two points in $\mathcal{G} \cap \mathbb{Z}^3$. So \mathcal{G} does not have IDP.

Let $f(x) = \sum_{\alpha \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}^m} c_\alpha x^\alpha \in \mathbb{C}[x_1, \dots, x_m]$. The *support* of f is defined by

$$\text{Supp}(f) = \{\alpha \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}^m \mid c_\alpha \neq 0\}.$$

The *Newton polytope* of f is defined by

$$\text{Newton}(f) = \text{Conv}(\text{Supp}(f)).$$

We say that f has *saturated Newton polytope (SNP)* if $\text{Newton}(f) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m = \text{Supp}(f)$.

Example 4. Let $f(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ be the polynomial

$$\begin{aligned} &x^{(3,1,0)} + x^{(3,0,1)} + x^{(1,0,3)} + x^{(0,1,3)} + x^{(0,3,1)} + x^{(1,3,0)} \\ &\quad + x^{(2,2,0)} + x^{(2,0,2)} + x^{(0,2,2)} + 2x^{(2,1,1)} + 2x^{(1,1,2)} + 2x^{(1,2,1)}. \end{aligned}$$

The set $\text{Supp}(f)$ contains twelve points in Example 1. Then $\text{Newton}(f)$ is the polytope \mathcal{P} in Example 1. Since $\text{Newton}(f) \cap \mathbb{Z}^3 = \text{Supp}(f)$, f has SNP.

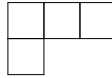
3. Schur polynomials

A *partition* with at most m parts is a sequence of weakly decreasing nonnegative integers $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_m)$. The *size* of partition λ is defined by $|\lambda| = \sum_{i=1}^m \lambda_i$. Each partition λ is presented by a *Young diagram* $Y(\lambda)$ that is a collection of boxes such that the leftmost boxes of each row are in a column, and the numbers of boxes from the top row to bottom row are $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots$, respectively. A *semistandard Young tableau* of shape λ with entries from $\{1, \dots, m\}$ is a filling of the Young diagram $Y(\lambda)$ by the ordered alphabet $\{1 < \dots < m\}$ such that the entries in each column are strictly increasing from top to bottom, and the entries in each row are weakly increasing from left to right. A Young tableau T is said to have *content* $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \dots)$ if α_i is the number of entries i in the tableau T . We write

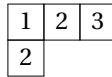
$$x^T = x^\alpha = x_1^{\alpha_1} x_2^{\alpha_2} \dots$$

For each partition λ with at most m parts, the *Schur polynomial* $s_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_m)$ is defined as the sum of x^T , where T runs over the semistandard Young tableaux of shape λ with filling from $\{1, \dots, m\}$.

Example 5. Vector $(3, 1, 0)$ is a partition. The Young diagram of $(3, 1, 0)$ is



The following filling is a semistandard tableau of shape $(3, 1, 0)$ and content $(1, 2, 1)$.



Schur polynomial $s_{(3,1,0)}(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ is the polynomial f in Example 4.

4. Good symmetric polynomials

Let α and β be partitions with at most m parts. We say β is *bigger* than α and write $\beta \geq \alpha$ if and only if $\beta_i \geq \alpha_i$ for all i . If α, β are partitions of the same size, we say β *dominates* α and write $\beta \triangleright \alpha$ if $\sum_{i=1}^j \beta_i \geq \sum_{i=1}^j \alpha_i$ for all $j \geq 1$.

Example 6. $(3, 1, 0) < (3, 3, 3)$ and $(3, 2, 0) \triangleright (3, 1, 1)$.

Let $F(x_1, \dots, x_m)$ be a linear combination of Schur polynomials associated to partitions with at most m parts. We can collect Schur polynomials appearing in F associated with partitions of the same size to a bracket. We say that F is *good* if it satisfies the following conditions:

- (a) The support of each bracket equals the union of supports of its Schur elements.
- (b) Suppose that there are $l + 1$ brackets in condition (a). In each bracket, there is a unique \triangleright -maximum partition. These \triangleright -maximum partitions have a form

$$\alpha = \lambda^0 < \dots < \lambda^l = \beta, \tag{1}$$

where $\alpha \leq \beta$ are fixed partitions and for each $i > 0$, λ^i is obtained from λ^{i-1} by adding a box in the northmost row of λ^{i-1} such that the addition gives a Young diagram, $\alpha < \lambda^i \leq \beta$.

Theorem 7. Let F be a good linear combination of Schur polynomials. Then F has SNP and $\text{Newton}(F)$ has IDP.

Corollary 8. Let F be a linear combination of Schur polynomials such that the condition (a) is replaced by (a') or the condition (b) is replaced by (b') below:

- (a') any two Schur polynomials in the same bracket of F have the same sign,
- (b') there exists partitions $\bar{\lambda}, \hat{\lambda}$ so that s_μ appears in F if and only if $\bar{\lambda} \leq \mu \leq \hat{\lambda}$.

Then F is a good polynomial. In particular, F has SNP and $\text{Newton}(F)$ has IDP.

Proof. The condition (a'), (b') are particular cases of condition (a), (b), respectively. Moreover, the partitions α, β in (b') are $\bar{\lambda}, \hat{\lambda}$, respectively. □

Example 9. Let $F(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ be

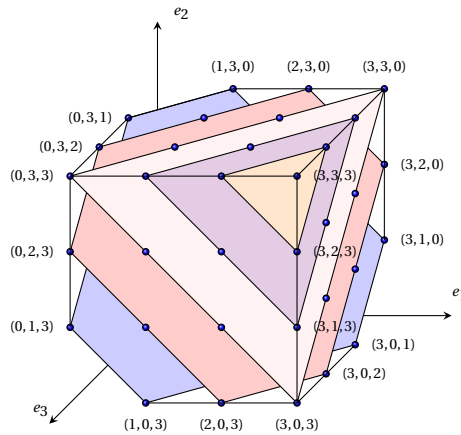
$$s_{(3,1,0)} - (3s_{(3,2,0)} + 6s_{(3,1,1)}) + (3s_{(3,3,0)} + 18s_{(3,2,1)}) - (18s_{(3,3,1)} + 4s_{(3,2,2)}) + 44s_{(3,3,2)} - 55s_{(3,3,3)}.$$

Schur polynomials in the same bracket have the same sign. The \triangleright -maximum partitions λ^i for $i = 0, \dots, 5$ chosen from brackets have form

$$\alpha = (3, 1, 0) < (3, 2, 0) < (3, 3, 0) < (3, 3, 1) < (3, 3, 2) < (3, 3, 3) = \beta.$$

Hence, F is a good symmetric polynomial. $\text{Newton}(F)$ is the convex hull of six different color polygons in the picture below. Each polygon is the Newton polytope of each bracket. In fact,

F is the inflated symmetric Grothendieck polynomial $G_{2,(3,1,0)}$ in [2]. Hence, F has SNP and $\text{Newton}(F)$ has IDP by [2, Proposition 21, Theorem 27].



The following examples tell us that when Theorem 7 does not apply, we may not have a definite affirmation of SNP and IDP.

Example 10. When the condition (a) fails, for instance:

- Let $F(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ be $s_{(3,1,0)} - s_{(2,2,0)}$. Then F does not have SNP because $(2, 2, 0) \notin \text{Supp}(F)$, but $\text{Newton}(F) = \text{Newton}(s_{(3,1,0)})$ still has IDP.

When adding blocks to α in a wrong order in (b), for instance:

- Let choose $\alpha = (3, 1, 0) < (3, 1, 1) < (3, 2, 1) = \beta$ and let $F(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ be $s_{(3,1,0)} + s_{(3,1,1)} + s_{(3,2,1)}$. Then F has SNP.
- Let choose $\alpha = (6, 4, 0) < (6, 4, 1) < (6, 4, 2) < (6, 4, 3) < (6, 5, 3) < (6, 6, 3) = \beta$ and let $F(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ be $s_{(6,4,0)} + s_{(6,4,1)} + s_{(6,4,2)} + s_{(6,4,3)} + s_{(6,5,3)} + s_{(6,6,3)}$. Since $(6, 5, 2) \in \text{Newton}(F) \cap \mathbb{Z}^3 \setminus \text{Supp}(f)$, then F does not has SNP.

We are not sure if there exists a symmetric polynomial that has SNP, but its Newton polytope does not have IDP.

We need the following facts to prove Theorem 7.

Proposition 11 ([14, Proposition 2.5]). Let α, β be partitions of the same size. Then, $\text{Newton}(s_\alpha) \subseteq \text{Newton}(s_\beta)$ if and only if $\alpha \trianglelefteq \beta$.

Lemma 12 ([5, Theorem 0.1]). Let α be a partition with at most m parts. Then s_α has SNP with Newton polytope being the convex hull of the S_m -orbit of α .

Proof of Theorem 7. We first prove that F has SNP.

We use the trick from [5].

- (1) Let $F = \sum_\mu C_\mu s_\mu$ with $C_\mu \neq 0$. By condition (a) of F , we have

$$\text{Supp}(F) = \bigcup_\mu \text{Supp}(s_\mu). \tag{2}$$

Then

$$\text{Newton}(F) = \text{Conv} \left(\bigcup_\mu \text{Supp}(s_\mu) \right). \tag{3}$$

Let $\alpha = \lambda^0 < \lambda^1 < \dots < \lambda^l = \beta$ be the \succeq -maximum partitions in condition (b) of F . By Proposition 11, the right-hand side of (2) is

$$\bigcup_{\mu} \text{Supp}(s_{\mu}) = \bigcup_{i=0}^l \text{Supp}(s_{\lambda^i}). \tag{4}$$

Therefore, by (2), (4),

$$\text{Supp}(F) = \bigcup_{i=0}^l \text{Supp}(s_{\lambda^i}). \tag{5}$$

By Proposition 11,

$$\text{Conv}(\text{Supp}(s_{\mu})) = \text{Newton}(s_{\mu}) \subseteq \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^i}) = \text{Conv}(\text{Supp}(s_{\lambda^i}))$$

for some i . It implies that the right-hand side of (3) is

$$\text{Conv}\left(\bigcup_{\mu} \text{Supp}(s_{\mu})\right) = \text{Conv}\left(\bigcup_{i=0}^l \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^i})\right). \tag{6}$$

Hence by (3), (6), we have

$$\text{Newton}(F) = \text{Conv}\left(\bigcup_{i=0}^l \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^i})\right). \tag{7}$$

- (2) Let p be a point in $\text{Newton}(F) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m$. By (7), p has form $p = \sum_{i=0}^l c_i v^i$ for some $v^i \in \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^i})$, and some $c_i \in \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$, $\sum_{i=0}^l c_i = 1$. We see that v^i is not a partition in general. However, if we denote the sum of its coordinates by $|v^i|$, then $|v^i| = |\lambda^i|$. Then $|p| = \sum_{i=0}^l c_i |\lambda^i|$ is between $|\lambda^0|$ and $|\lambda^l|$, because of (1). Thus $|p| = |\lambda^j|$ for some $j \in [0, l]$, because λ^i is obtained from λ^{i-1} by adding a box. Let \bar{p} be $\sum_{i=0}^l c_i \lambda^i$ and p^\downarrow be the rearrangement of the components of p into decreasing order. It was proven in [5] that $p^\downarrow \preceq (\bar{p})^\downarrow$ (Claim B) and $(\bar{p})^\downarrow \preceq \lambda^j$ (Claim C). So $p^\downarrow \preceq \lambda^j$. By Lemma 12, Proposition 11, p is a point in

$$\text{Newton}(s_{p^\downarrow}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m \subseteq \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^j}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m = \text{Supp}(s_{\lambda^j}) \subseteq \text{Supp}(F). \tag{8}$$

Therefore we conclude that F has SNP.

Now we show that $\text{Newton}(F)$ has IDP.

We use the trick from [2].

- (1) We have proven that F has SNP. Then by (5), Lemma 12, we have

$$\text{Newton}(F) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m = \text{Supp}(F) = \bigcup_{i=0}^l \text{Supp}(s_{\lambda^i}) = \bigcup_{i=0}^l \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^i}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m. \tag{9}$$

- (2) Suppose that $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_m)$ and $\beta = (\beta_1, \dots, \beta_m)$. For $i = 1, \dots, m - 1$, set $\lambda^{(i)} = (\beta_1, \dots, \beta_i, \alpha_{i+1}, \dots, \alpha_m)$. Set $\lambda^{(0)} = \alpha$, $\lambda^{(m)} = \beta$. Then $\alpha = \lambda^{(0)} < \dots < \lambda^{(m)} = \beta$ is a sub-chain of (1). We have

$$\text{Newton}(F) = \text{Conv}\left(\bigcup_{i=0}^m \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^{(i)}})\right). \tag{10}$$

Indeed, $\text{Newton}(F)$ is the convex hull of its vertex set. We can get (10) from (7) by showing that a partition λ^j not of form $\lambda^{(i)}$ is not a vertex of $\text{Newton}(F)$. It is trivial because $\lambda^j = \frac{1}{2}(\lambda^{j-1} + \lambda^{j+1})$.

- (3) For a positive integer t , we construct a chain of form (1)

$$t\alpha = \Lambda^0 < \dots < \Lambda^L = t\beta. \tag{11}$$

Set $F_t = \sum_{i=0}^L s_{\Lambda^i}$. Then F_t is a good linear combination of Schur polynomials and $\Lambda^{(i)} = t\lambda^{(i)}$ for each $i = 0, \dots, m$. By (10), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Newton}(F_t) &= \text{Conv}\left(\bigcup_{i=0}^m \text{Newton}(s_{\Lambda^{(i)}})\right) \\ &= t\text{Conv}\left(\bigcup_{i=0}^m \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^{(i)}})\right) \\ &= t\text{Newton}(F). \end{aligned} \tag{12}$$

(4) Let p a point in $t\text{Newton}(F) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m$. By (12), p is a point in $\text{Newton}(F_t) \cap \mathbb{Z}$. Since F_t has SNP, by (9), it is a point in $\text{Newton}(s_{\Lambda^i}) \cap \mathbb{Z}$ for some Λ^i in (11). Hence, p is the content of some semistandard tableau T of shape Λ^i with filling from $\{1, \dots, m\}$. For $j = 1, \dots, t$, let T_j be the semistandard tableau obtained by taking j' -th column of T for $j' \equiv j \pmod t$. Let $\theta(j)$ be the shape of tableau T_j . Let v_j be the content of tableau T_j . Then $p = v_1 + \dots + v_t$. We also have $\alpha \leq \theta(j) \leq \beta$. So there is a unique partition λ^k in chain (1) such that $\theta(j) \trianglelefteq \lambda^k$. Then by Proposition 11, v_j is a point in

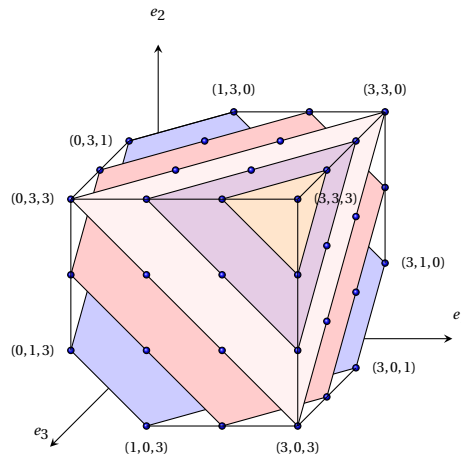
$$\text{Newton}(s_{\theta(j)}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m \subseteq \text{Newton}(s_{\lambda^k}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m.$$

So by (9), v_j is a point of $\text{Newton}(F) \cap \mathbb{Z}^m$. Therefore we conclude that $\text{Newton}(F)$ has IDP. \square

Example 13. In Example 9, the subchain $\lambda^{(i)}$ for $i = 0, \dots, 3$ in the proof of Theorem 7 is

$$\alpha = (3, 1, 0) = (3, 1, 0) < (3, 3, 0) < (3, 3, 3) = \beta.$$

In this case, $\lambda^{(0)} = \lambda^{(1)}$. The vertex set of $\text{Newton}(F)$ is the union of S_3 -orbits of partitions $(3, 1, 0), (3, 3, 0), (3, 3, 3)$.



5. Applications

Theorem 7, Corollary 8 cover the following cases. Known results are:

- SNP and IDP of inflated symmetric Grothendieck polynomials $G_{h,\lambda}$ (see [5, Theorem 0.1], [2, Proposition 21, Theorem 27]). Indeed, by definition

$$G_{h,\lambda} = \sum_{\mu} (-1)^{|\mu/\lambda|} b_{h,\lambda\mu} s_{\mu},$$

where $b_{h,\lambda\mu}$ is the number of fillings satisfying certain conditions. So, all Schur elements in the same bracket with s_{μ} have the same sign $(-1)^{|\mu/\lambda|}$, and then the condition (a)

is valid. By [2, Lemma 18(c)], $b_{h,\lambda\mu}$ is nonzero if and only if $\lambda \leq \mu \leq \lambda^{(N)}$. Hence, by Corollary 8, the condition (b) is valid with $\alpha = \lambda$ and $\beta = \lambda^{(N)}$.

- SNP and IDP of the following symmetric polynomials in [12]: Stembridge's symmetric polynomials associated with totally nonnegative matrices (Theorem 2.28), cycle index polynomials (Theorem 2.30), Reutenauer's symmetric polynomials (Theorem 2.32), Schur P -polynomials and Schur Q -polynomials (Proposition 3.5), Stanley's symmetric polynomials (Theorem 5.8). They are particular cases of [12, Propositions 2.5(III)]. The proposition considers homogenous symmetric polynomials of degree d

$$f = \sum_{|\mu|=d} c_\mu s_\mu$$

with suppose that there exists λ so that $c_\lambda \neq 0$, $c_\mu \neq 0$ only if $\mu \leq \lambda$, and $c_\mu \geq 0$ for all μ . So, condition (a) is valid. The condition (b) is valid with $\alpha = \beta = \lambda$. More precisely, the Schur expansion of those polynomials have nonnegative coefficients by [21], [18, p. 396], [12, p. 12], [20], [16, Theorems 3.2, 4.1], respectively. The condition (b) is valid with $\alpha = \beta$ and they can be found in the proofs of corresponding theorems in [12].

- SNP and IDP of the following symmetric polynomials in [11]: chromatic symmetric polynomials of co-bipartite graphs (Proposition 3.1), indifference graphs of Dyck paths (Proposition 4.1), incomparability graphs of (3+1)-free posets (Theorem 5.7). They are also particular cases of [12, Proposition 2.5(III)] above. More precisely, the Schur expansion of those polynomials have nonnegative coefficients by [17, Corollary 3.6], [19], [8], respectively. Hence, condition (a) is valid. The condition (b) is valid with $\alpha = \beta$ and they are $\lambda(G)$, $\lambda^{gr}(d)$, $\lambda^{gr}(P)$, respectively.

Unknown results are:

- SNP and IDP of dual Grothendieck polynomials g_λ in [10]. Indeed, [10, Theorem 9.8] states that

$$g_\lambda = \sum_{\mu} f_{\lambda}^{\mu} s_{\mu},$$

where f_{λ}^{μ} is the number of semistandard tableaux of the skew shape λ/μ with entries of the i -th row lie in $[1, i-1]$. So, all nonzero coefficients f_{λ}^{μ} have same sign, and then the condition (a) is valid. Moreover, f_{λ}^{μ} is nonzero if and only if $(\lambda_1) \leq \mu \leq \lambda$. Hence, by Corollary 8, the condition (b) is valid with $\alpha = (\lambda_1)$ and $\beta = \lambda$.

Remark 14. Though Theorem 7 covers [2, Theorem 27], inside the proofs we do not need to choose F_t as a generalization of $G_{th,t\lambda}$. The key point is to choose a set-up for F_t so that it has SNP and $\text{Newton}(F_t) = t \text{Newton}(F)$ for any t . For this purpose, there are many choices for F_t , for instance $\sum_{i=0}^L s_{\Lambda^i}$, or $\sum_{i=0}^L (-1)^i s_{\Lambda^i}$, or $G_{th,t\lambda}$ when $F = G_{h,\lambda}$, etc. Our first choice $F_t = \sum_{i=0}^L s_{\Lambda^i}$ is the simplest.

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