

Problem 3. Suppose that \mathcal{W}_1 is a "stronger" set of words than \mathcal{W}_2 in the sense that

$$\forall G(\forall w \in \mathcal{W}_1(G \models w = 1) \rightarrow \forall w \in \mathcal{W}_2(G \models w = 1)).$$

Show that for any group H

- (a) $V_{\mathcal{W}_2}(H) \subseteq V_{\mathcal{W}_1}(H)$
- (b) $M_{\mathcal{W}_1}(H) \subseteq M_{\mathcal{W}_2}(H)$

Proof.

- (a) Let H be a group and let \mathcal{W}_1 and \mathcal{W}_2 be sets of words (e.g., $\mathcal{W}_1 = \{\text{Words go here}\}$) such that \mathcal{W}_1 is stronger than \mathcal{W}_2 . Recall that the verbal subgroup of H associated to \mathcal{W}_1 is the least normal subgroup of H such that $\forall w \in \mathcal{W}_1, H/V_{\mathcal{W}_1}(H) \models w = 1$. Since \mathcal{W}_1 is a stronger set of words than \mathcal{W}_2 , we also have that $\forall w \in \mathcal{W}_2, H/V_{\mathcal{W}_1}(H) \models w = 1$. Similarly, $V_{\mathcal{W}_2}(H)$ is the least normal subgroup of H satisfying this property, so $V_{\mathcal{W}_2}(H) \subseteq V_{\mathcal{W}_1}(H)$.

- (b) Let H be a group and let \mathcal{W}_1 and \mathcal{W}_2 be sets of words such that \mathcal{W}_1 is stronger than \mathcal{W}_2 .

Let $w \in \mathcal{W}_2$ take n inputs and let $X = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ be a set of n letters. Then from our previous result, $V_{\mathcal{W}_2}(F_{Grp}(X)) \subseteq V_{\mathcal{W}_1}(F_{Grp}(X))$, so in particular, $w(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in V_{\mathcal{W}_1}(F_{Grp}(X))$. By the construction of verbal subgroups, there exist $w_1, \dots, w_m \in \mathcal{W}_1$, a word v , and $g_1, \dots, g_l \in F_{Grp}(X)$ such that $w(x_1, \dots, x_n) = v(w_1(g_1, \dots, g_l), \dots, w_m(g_1, \dots, g_l))$ (note that we allow without loss of generality for each inner word to take the same number of inputs as not all inputs need be used.) Our choice of $w \in \mathcal{W}_2$ was arbitrary, so this construction is valid for any word in \mathcal{W}_2 . Moreover, by the universal property of free groups, we can perform this construction for any group.

Now let $h \in M_{\mathcal{W}_1}(H)$ and let $w \in \mathcal{W}_2$. We wish to show $w(x_1, \dots, x_n) = w(x_1, \dots, hx_i, \dots, x_n) = w(x_1, \dots, x_i h, \dots, x_n)$ for any $x_1, \dots, x_n \in H$. There exist $w_1, \dots, w_m \in \mathcal{W}_1$, a word v , and $g_1, \dots, g_l \in H$ such that $w(x_1, \dots, x_n) = v(w_1(g_1, \dots, g_l), \dots, w_m(g_1, \dots, g_l))$. Performing the same construction on $w(x_1, \dots, hx_i, \dots, x_n)$, we obtain the same words, but possibly different values from H , say g'_1, \dots, g'_l . However, each g_j, g'_j is constructible from x_1, \dots, x_n , so $g_j = g'_j$ if x_i does not appear as a factor of g_j . Assume that x_i does appear as a factor of g_j , and fix w_k . It suffices to show that $w_k(g_1, \dots, g_l) = w_k(g'_1, \dots, g'_l)$. For each instance of h in g'_j , we can write $g'_j = ahx_i b = ((ahx_i b)^{a^{-1}})^a = (hx_i ba)^a$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} w_k(g'_1, \dots, g'_j, \dots, g'_l) &= (w_k(g'_1, \dots, g'_j, \dots, g'_l)^{a^{-1}})^a \\ &= w_k(g_1^{a^{-1}}, \dots, hx_i ba, \dots, g_l^{a^{-1}})^a \\ &= w_k(g_1^{a^{-1}}, \dots, x_i ba, \dots, g_l^{a^{-1}})^a \\ &= w_k(g_1, \dots, ax_i b, \dots, g_l) \end{aligned}$$

Recursively applying this process to the finite number of instances of h and each g'_j , we arrive at $w_k(g_1, \dots, g_l) = w_k(g'_1, \dots, g'_l)$. Then $w(x_1, \dots, x_n) = w(x_1, \dots, hx_i, \dots, x_n)$. The proof of $w(x_1, \dots, x_n) = w(x_1, \dots, x_i h, \dots, x_n)$ is nearly identical, and only varies at the conjugation step. Instead of conjugating by $a^{-1}a$, conjugation by bb^{-1} suffices. Then $h \in M_{\mathcal{W}_2}(H)$, and so $M_{\mathcal{W}_1}(H) \subseteq M_{\mathcal{W}_2}(H)$. □