

# A Relationship Between the Major Index For Tableaux and the Charge Statistic For Permutations

Kendra Killpatrick

Pepperdine University

Malibu, California

Kendra.Killpatrick@pepperdine.edu

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## Abstract

The widely studied  $q$ -polynomial  $f^\lambda(q)$ , which specializes when  $q = 1$  to  $f^\lambda$ , the number of standard Young tableaux of shape  $\lambda$ , has multiple combinatorial interpretations. It represents the dimension of the unipotent representation  $S_q^\lambda$  of the finite general linear group  $GL_n(q)$ , it occurs as a special case of the Kostka-Foulkes polynomials, and it gives the generating function for the *major index* statistic on standard Young tableaux. Similarly, the  $q$ -polynomial  $g^\lambda(q)$  has combinatorial interpretations as the  $q$ -multinomial coefficient, as the dimension of the permutation representation  $M_q^\lambda$  of the general linear group  $GL_n(q)$ , and as the generating function for both the *inversion* statistic and the *charge* statistic on permutations in  $W_\lambda$ . It is a well known result that for  $\lambda$  a partition of  $n$ ,  $\dim(M_q^\lambda) = \sum_\mu K_{\mu\lambda} \dim(S_q^\mu)$ , where the sum is over all partitions  $\mu$  of  $n$  and where the Kostka number  $K_{\mu\lambda}$  gives the number of semistandard Young tableaux of shape  $\mu$  and content  $\lambda$ . Thus  $g^\lambda(q) - f^\lambda(q)$  is a  $q$ -polynomial with nonnegative coefficients. This paper gives a combinatorial proof of this result by defining an injection  $f$  from the set of standard Young tableaux of shape  $\lambda$ ,  $SYT(\lambda)$ , to  $W_\lambda$  such that  $maj(T) = ch(f(T))$  for  $T \in SYT(\lambda)$ .

Key words: Young tableaux, permutation statistics, inversion statistic, charge statistic, Kostka polynomials.

## 1 Introduction

For  $\lambda$  any partition of  $n$ ,  $f^\lambda$  gives the number of standard Young tableaux of shape  $\lambda$ . The  $q$ -version of  $f^\lambda$  is a polynomial that has many important combinatorial interpretations. In particular,  $f^\lambda(q)$  is known to give the dimension of the unipotent representation  $S_q^\lambda$

of the finite general linear group  $GL_n(q)$ . The polynomial  $f^\lambda(q)$  can be computed as the generating function for the major index  $maj(T)$  on the set of standard Young tableaux of shape  $\lambda$ ,  $SYT(\lambda)$ .

$$f^\lambda(q) = \sum_{T \in SYT(\lambda)} q^{maj(T)}$$

In addition, the  $q$ -multinomial coefficient

$$g^\lambda(q) = \left[ \begin{matrix} n \\ \lambda_1, \lambda_2, \lambda_3, \dots, \lambda_k \end{matrix} \right] = \frac{[n!]}{[\lambda_1!][\lambda_2!][\lambda_3!] \cdots [\lambda_k!]}$$

is known to give the dimension of the permutation representation  $M_q^\lambda$  of  $GL_n(q)$ . The polynomial  $g^\lambda(q)$  also has a combinatorial interpretation as

$$g^\lambda(q) = \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{inv(\pi)}$$

where  $W_\lambda$  is the subset of permutations in  $S_n$  of type  $\lambda$  and  $inv(\pi)$  is the inversion statistic on  $\pi$ . The following is a well-known result on the representation of  $GL_n(q)$ :

**Proposition 1.** *For  $\lambda$  a partition of  $n$ ,*

$$\dim(M_q^\lambda) = \sum_{\mu \vdash n} K_{\mu\lambda} \dim(S_q^\mu),$$

where  $K_{\mu\lambda}$  is the Kostka number which counts the number of semi-standard tableaux of shape  $\mu$  and content  $\lambda$ .

Thus we have

$$g^\lambda(q) = \sum_{\mu \vdash n} K_{\mu\lambda} f^\mu(q)$$

and in particular, since  $K_{\lambda\lambda} = 1$  for all  $\lambda$ ,

$$g^\lambda(q) = f^\lambda(q) + \sum_{\substack{\mu \vdash n \\ \mu \neq \lambda}} K_{\mu\lambda} f^\mu(q).$$

Thus

$$g^\lambda(q) - f^\lambda(q) = \sum_{\substack{\mu \vdash n \\ \mu \neq \lambda}} K_{\mu\lambda} f^\mu(q)$$

is a  $q$ -polynomial with non-negative coefficients. This implies that

$$g^\lambda(q) - f^\lambda(q) = \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{inv(\pi)} - \sum_{T \in SYT(\lambda)} q^{maj(T)}$$

is a  $q$ -polynomial with non-negative coefficients. It is natural, then, to seek an injection from standard Young tableaux of shape  $\lambda$  to permutations in  $W_\lambda$  which takes the statistic

$maj(T)$  to the statistic  $inv(\pi)$ . Cho [2] has recently given such an injection for  $\lambda$  a two part partition, but the given injection does not hold for general  $\lambda$  and finding such an injection for all partitions  $\lambda$  is left as an open question. In Section 3 of this paper, we give explicit proofs for some known but not well documented results on the charge statistic,  $ch(\pi)$ , namely

$$\sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{inv(\pi)} = \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{ch(\pi)}.$$

This implies that

$$g^\lambda(q) - f^\lambda(q) = \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{ch(\pi)} - \sum_{T \in SYT(\lambda)} q^{maj(T)}.$$

The main result of this paper, in Section 4, is to answer Cho's open questions by giving a general injection  $h$  from  $SYT(\lambda)$  to  $W_\lambda$  which takes  $maj(T)$  to  $ch(h(T))$ . Section 2 of the paper contains necessary background and definitions.

## 2 Definitions and Background

We say  $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k)$  is a *partition of  $n$*  if  $\lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_k > 0$  and  $\sum_{i=1}^k \lambda_i = n$ . A partition is described pictorially by its *Ferrers diagram*, an array of  $n$  dots into  $k$  left-justified rows with row  $i$  containing  $\lambda_i$  dots for  $1 \leq i \leq k$ . For example, the Ferrers diagram for the partition  $\lambda = (6, 5, 3, 3, 1)$  is:

$$T = \begin{array}{cccccc} \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\ \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \\ \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & & & \\ \bullet & \bullet & \bullet & & & \\ \bullet & & & & & \end{array}$$

A *standard Young tableau of shape  $\lambda$*  is a filling of the Ferrers diagram for  $\lambda$  with the numbers  $1, 2, \dots, n$  such that rows are strictly increasing from left to right and columns are strictly increasing from top to bottom. One example of a standard Young tableau for the partition  $\lambda = 65331$  is shown below:

$$T = \begin{array}{cccccc} 1 & 2 & 6 & 7 & 9 & 14 \\ 3 & 5 & 8 & 15 & 17 & \\ 4 & 11 & 12 & & & \\ 10 & 16 & 18 & & & \\ 13 & & & & & \end{array}$$

Let  $f^\lambda$  denote the number of standard Young tableaux of shape  $\lambda$ .

For a standard Young tableau  $T$ , the major index of  $T$  is given by

$$maj(T) = \sum_{i \in D(T)} i$$

where  $D(T) = \{ i \mid i + 1 \text{ is in a row strictly below that of } i \text{ in } T \}$ . For the tableau  $T$  given in the previous example,  $D(T) = \{2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17\}$  and  $maj(T) = 79$ .

For a permutation  $\pi = \pi_1\pi_2 \cdots \pi_n \in S_n$ , define an *inversion* to be a pair  $(i, j)$  such that  $i < j$  and  $\pi_i > \pi_j$ . Then the *inversion statistic*,  $inv(\pi)$ , is the total number of inversions in  $\pi$ .

For example, for  $\pi = 3 \ 2 \ 8 \ 5 \ 7 \ 4 \ 6 \ 1 \ 9$ ,  $inv(\pi) = 15$  since each of the pairs  $(1, 2), (1, 3), (1, 4), (1, 5), (1, 6), (1, 7), (1, 8), (2, 3), (4, 5), (4, 7), (4, 8), (5, 8), (6, 7), (6, 8), (7, 8)$  is an inversion.

Let  $W_\lambda$  be the subset of  $S_n$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} \pi_1 &< \pi_2 < \cdots < \pi_{\lambda_1} \\ \pi_{\lambda_1+1} &< \pi_{\lambda_1+2} < \cdots < \pi_{\lambda_1+\lambda_2} \\ &\dots \\ \pi_{\lambda_1+\lambda_2+\cdots+\lambda_{k-1}+1} &< \pi_{\lambda_1+\lambda_2+\cdots+\lambda_{k-1}+2} < \cdots < \pi_n \end{aligned}$$

For example, for  $\lambda = (4, 3, 3, 1)$ ,

$$\pi = 2 \ 4 \ 5 \ 9 \ 1 \ 3 \ 10 \ 6 \ 8 \ 11 \ 7$$

is an element of  $W_{4331}$ .

We will use the definition of  $W_\lambda$  for  $\lambda$  any combination of  $n$ , not just for  $\lambda$  a partition of  $n$ . Note that there is no required relationship between  $\pi_{\lambda_1}$  and  $\pi_{\lambda_1+1}$ , between  $\pi_{\lambda_1+\lambda_2}$  and  $\pi_{\lambda_1+\lambda_2+1}$ , and so on. For any  $W_\lambda = W_{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k}$ , define  $W_{\tilde{\lambda}_i} = W_{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_{i-1}, \dots, \lambda_k}$  for  $1 \leq i \leq k$ .

Let  $\pi$  be a permutation in  $S_n$ . For any  $i$  in the permutation, define the *charge value of  $i$* ,  $chv(i)$ , recursively as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} chv(1) &= 0 \\ chv(i) &= chv(i-1) \text{ if } i \text{ is to the right of } i-1 \text{ in } \pi \\ chv(i) &= chv(i-1) + 1 \text{ if } i \text{ is to the left of } i-1 \text{ in } \pi \end{aligned}$$

Now for  $\pi \in S_n$ , define the *charge of  $\pi$* ,  $ch(\pi)$ , to be

$$ch(\pi) = \sum_{i=1}^n chv(i).$$

In the following example of a permutation  $\pi = 328574619$  with  $ch(\pi) = 25$ , the charge values of each element are given below the permutation:

$$\begin{array}{cccccccccc} \pi & = & 3 & 2 & 8 & 5 & 7 & 4 & 6 & 1 & 9 \\ & & & 2 & 1 & 5 & 3 & 4 & 2 & 3 & 0 & 5 \end{array}$$

The definition of the charge statistic was first given by Lascoux and Schützenberger [8].



**Lemma 3.**

$$\sum_{\pi \in S_n} q^{\text{inv}(\pi)} = (1 + q + q^2 + \cdots + q^{n-1}) \sum_{\sigma \in S_{n-1}} q^{\text{inv}(\sigma)}.$$

*Proof.* For details about the inversion statistic, one can consult [3] or [4]. □

The following theorem [7] follows immediately from the previous Lemmas once the initial conditions are checked.

**Theorem 1.**

$$\sum_{\pi \in S_n} q^{\text{ch}(\pi)} = \sum_{\pi \in S_n} q^{\text{inv}(\pi)}.$$

We now give details that the charge statistic and the inversion statistic not only have the same generating function on  $S_n$ , but they in fact have the same generating function on  $W_\lambda$ .

**Lemma 4.** For  $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k)$  a combination of  $n$  for any integer  $n$ ,

$$\sum_{\pi \in W_{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k}} q^{\text{inv}(\pi)} = \sum_{\sigma \in W_{\lambda_2, \lambda_3, \dots, \lambda_k, \lambda_1}} q^{\text{inv}(\sigma)}.$$

*Proof.* Let  $\pi = \pi_1 \pi_2 \dots \pi_n \in W_{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k}$ . Create  $\sigma = \sigma_1 \sigma_2 \dots \sigma_k \in W_{\lambda_2, \lambda_3, \dots, \lambda_k, \lambda_1}$  in the following manner. For  $1 \leq i \leq \lambda_1$ , let  $\sigma_{n+1-i} = n + 1 - \pi_i$ . Next, relabel the elements  $\pi_{\lambda_1+1}$  through  $\pi_n$  with the remaining  $n - \lambda_1$  numbers, in the same relative order. For example, if

$$\pi = 2 \ 7 \ 11 \ 3 \ 6 \ 1 \ 10 \ 12 \ 15 \ 5 \ 8 \ 14 \ 4 \ 9 \ 13$$

in  $W_{3,2,4,3,3}$ , we have

$$\sigma_{15} = 16 - \pi_1 = 14$$

$$\sigma_{14} = 16 - \pi_2 = 9$$

$$\sigma_{13} = 16 - \pi_3 = 5$$

and the numbers

$$\pi_4 \ \pi_5 \ \cdots \ \pi_{15} = 3 \ 6 \ 1 \ 10 \ 12 \ 15 \ 5 \ 8 \ 14 \ 4 \ 9 \ 13$$

are relabeled in the same relative order using the numbers  $[n] - \{5, 9, 14\}$  to give

$$\sigma_1 \ \sigma_2 \ \cdots \ \sigma_{n-\lambda_1} = 2 \ 6 \ 1 \ 10 \ 11 \ 15 \ 4 \ 7 \ 13 \ 3 \ 8 \ 12$$

and  $\sigma \in W_{2,4,3,3,3}$ . Thus

$$\sigma = 2 \ 6 \ 1 \ 10 \ 11 \ 15 \ 4 \ 7 \ 13 \ 3 \ 8 \ 12 \ 5 \ 9 \ 14.$$

It is easy to see that  $\sigma$  is unique and that one can reverse the process to take any  $\sigma \in W_{\lambda_2, \lambda_3, \dots, \lambda_k, \lambda_1}$  to a unique  $\pi \in W_{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k}$ , so this process gives a bijection between  $W_{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k}$  and  $W_{\lambda_2, \lambda_3, \dots, \lambda_k, \lambda_1}$ .

Now we prove that  $inv(\pi) = inv(\sigma)$ . Since  $\pi \in W_{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k}$ , we have  $\pi_1 < \pi_2 < \dots < \pi_{\lambda_1}$  so there are no inversions between elements  $\pi_1, \pi_2, \dots, \pi_{\lambda_1}$ . Similarly, since  $\sigma_{n+1-i} = n + 1 - \pi_i$  we have  $\sigma_{n-\lambda_1+1} < \sigma_{n-\lambda_1+2} < \dots < \sigma_n$  so there are no inversions between elements in  $\sigma_{n-\lambda_1+1}, \sigma_{n-\lambda_1+2}, \dots, \sigma_n$ . Since  $\sigma_1 \sigma_2 \dots \sigma_{n-\lambda_1}$  are in the same relative order as  $\pi_{\lambda_1+1} \pi_{\lambda_1+2} \dots \pi_n$ , the number of inversions between elements in these two parts is the same.

Now suppose that  $\pi_i = j$  for  $1 \leq i \leq \lambda_1$ . Then  $\pi_i$  forms inversions with  $(j-1) - (i-1) = j - i$  elements in  $\pi_{\lambda_1+1} \pi_{\lambda_1+2} \dots \pi_n$  since there are  $j - 1$  total elements less than  $j$  and  $i - 1$  of them lie to the left of  $\pi_i$  in  $\pi$ . If  $\pi_i = j$  then  $\sigma_{n+1-i} = n + 1 - j$ . There are  $j - 1$  total elements bigger than  $n + 1 - j$  and  $i - 1$  of them lie to the right of  $\sigma_{n+1-j}$  in  $\sigma$  since there are  $i - 1$  elements to the left of  $\pi_i = j$  in  $\pi$ . This means that  $\sigma_{n+1-j}$ , like  $\pi_i$ , forms inversions with  $(j - 1) - (i - 1) = j - i$  elements in  $\sigma_1 \sigma_2 \dots \sigma_{n-\lambda_1}$ . □

**Lemma 5.** For  $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k)$  a combination of  $n$  for any integer  $n$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{inv(\pi)} &= \left( \sum_{\sigma \in W_{\lambda_1}^-} q^{inv(\sigma)} \right) + \left( q^{\lambda_1} \sum_{\sigma \in W_{\lambda_2}^-} q^{inv(\sigma)} \right) + \dots \\ &\quad + \left( q^{\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \dots + \lambda_{k-1}} \sum_{\sigma \in W_{\lambda_k}^-} q^{inv(\sigma)} \right). \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* Again, for the details of results on the inversion statistic, one can consult [3] or [4]. □

**Lemma 6.** For  $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k)$  a combination of  $n$  for any integer  $n$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{ch(\pi)} &= \left( \sum_{\sigma \in W_{\lambda_1-1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k}} q^{ch(\sigma)} \right) + \left( q^{\lambda_1} \sum_{\sigma \in W_{\lambda_2-1, \lambda_3, \dots, \lambda_k, \lambda_1}} q^{ch(\sigma)} \right) + \dots \\ &\quad + \left( (q^{\lambda_1 + \dots + \lambda_{k-1}}) \sum_{\sigma \in W_{\lambda_k-1, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{k-1}}} q^{ch(\sigma)} \right). \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* Let  $\pi \in W_\lambda$ . Suppose the 1 in  $\pi$  lies in block  $\lambda_i$ , so

$$\pi = \pi_1 \pi_2 \dots \pi_{\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \dots + \lambda_{i-1}} 1 \pi_{\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \dots + \lambda_{i-1} + 2} \dots \pi_n.$$

By Lemma 1,

$$ch(\pi) = ch(1 \pi_{\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \dots + \lambda_{i-1} + 2} \dots \pi_n \pi_1 \pi_2 \dots \pi_{\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \dots + \lambda_{i-1}}) + \lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \dots + \lambda_{i-1}.$$

To form  $\sigma \in W_{\lambda_{i-1}, \lambda_{i+1}, \dots, \lambda_k, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{i-1}}$ , we now remove the initial 1 and relabel each of the remaining  $\pi_i$  with  $\pi_i - 1$ . Since we have removed an initial 1, the charge of

$$1\pi_{\lambda_1+\lambda_2+\dots+\lambda_{i-1}+2} \cdots \pi_n \pi_1 \pi_2 \cdots \pi_{\lambda_1+\lambda_2+\dots+\lambda_{i-1}}$$

is equal to the charge of the newly formed  $\sigma$ . Thus for each  $\pi \in W_\lambda$  with a 1 in the  $\lambda_i$  block and  $\sigma$  formed in this manner,

$$ch(\pi) = ch(\sigma) + (\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \cdots + \lambda_{i-1}).$$

which gives the desired result. □

**Theorem 2.** For  $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_k)$  a combination of  $n$  for any integer  $n$ ,

$$\sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{inv(\pi)} = \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{ch(\pi)}.$$

*Proof.* This result follows immediately by induction from Lemmas 4, 5 and 6. □

## 4 An Injection from $SYT(\lambda)$ to $W_\lambda$

From Section 1, we have that  $g^\lambda(q) - f^\lambda(q) = \sum_{\pi \in W_\lambda} q^{ch(\pi)} - \sum_{\pi \in SYT(\lambda)} q^{maj(T)}$  is a polynomial with non-negative coefficients. We will now define an injection  $h$  from  $SYT(\lambda)$  to  $W_\lambda$  such that  $maj(T) = ch(h(T))$ . Let  $T \in SYT(\lambda)$ . Write down the elements in  $T$  by first reading the top row of  $T$  from right to left, then the second row of  $T$  from right to left, and so on until reaching the bottom row. Call this permutation  $\sigma$ . For example, if

$$T = \begin{array}{cccc} & 1 & 2 & 3 & 6 \\ & 4 & 8 & 9 & \\ & 5 & & & \\ & 7 & & & \end{array}$$

then  $\sigma = 632198457$ . To create  $\pi \in W_\lambda$ , let  $\pi_i = n - \sigma_i + 1$ . In the example,  $\pi = 478912653$  and  $\pi \in W_{4311}$ . Let  $h(T) = \pi$ . Note that for a given  $T$ ,  $h(T)$  is uniquely defined. Since each row of  $T$  is strictly increasing, then the first  $\lambda_1$  elements of  $\sigma$  are strictly decreasing, the next  $\lambda_2$  elements of  $\sigma$  are strictly decreasing, and so on. Thus when  $\pi$  is formed, the first  $\lambda_i$  elements of  $\pi$  are strictly increasing, the next  $\lambda_2$  elements of  $\pi$  are strictly increasing, and so on, so  $\pi \in W_\lambda$ .

**Theorem 3.** For  $T \in SYT(\lambda)$ ,  $maj(T) = ch(h(T))$ .

*Proof.* We will prove that if  $i \in D(T)$ , then the charge contribution of  $n - i + 1$  in  $h(T)$  is equal to  $i$ . In addition, if  $i$  is not in  $D(T)$ , then the charge contribution of  $n - i + 1$  in  $h(T)$  is equal to 0.

Let  $i \in D(T)$ . Then  $i$  lies in a row strictly above that of  $i + 1$  in  $T$ . This implies that  $i$  lies to the left of  $i + 1$  in  $\sigma$ , and thus  $n - i + 1$  lies to the left of  $n - (i + 1) + 1 = n - i$

in  $\pi$ . By the definition of charge contribution, we find that since  $n - i + 1$  lies to the left of  $n - i$  the charge contribution of  $n - i + 1$  is equal to  $n - (n - i + 1) - 1 = i$ .

Suppose  $i \notin D(T)$ . Then  $i$  either lies in a row below  $i + 1$  in  $T$  or they lie in the same row, in which case  $i$  lies to the left of  $i + 1$ . In either case,  $i$  lies to the right of  $i + 1$  in  $\sigma$  and thus  $n - i + 1$  lies to the right of  $n - (i + 1) + 1 = n - i$  in  $\pi$ . By the definition of charge contribution, we find that the charge contribution of  $n - i + 1$  is equal to zero.

Since  $maj(T) = \sum_{\{i \in D(T)\}} i$  and  $ch(\pi) = \sum_i cc(i)$ , we have that  $maj(T) = ch(h(T))$ .  $\square$

In the previous example,  $D(T) = \{3, 4, 6\}$  so  $maj(T) = 13$  and  $ch(h(T)) = ch(478912653)$  which is also 13.

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