

CENTRAL EXTENSIONS OF SOME LIE ALGEBRAS

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ABSTRACT. We consider three Lie algebras: $Der \mathbb{C}((t))$, the Lie algebra of all derivations on the algebra $\mathbb{C}((t))$ of formal Laurent series; the Lie algebra of all differential operators on $\mathbb{C}((t))$; and the Lie algebra of all differential operators on $\mathbb{C}((t)) \otimes \mathbb{C}^n$. We prove that each of these Lie algebras has an essentially unique nontrivial central extension.

The Lie algebra of all derivations on the Laurent polynomial algebra $\mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}]$ can also be characterized as the Lie algebra of vector fields on the circle. The analogous object over a field F of characteristic $p > 0$, $Der F[t]/(t^p)$, is called the Witt algebra $[C]$, and this name is sometimes applied to $Der \mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}]$ as well. It is known $[Bl]$ that $Der F[t]/(t^p)$ has an essentially unique nontrivial one-dimensional central extension, and also $[GF]$ that $Der \mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}]$ has an essentially unique nontrivial one-dimensional central extension. The proofs of these facts are similar. The nontrivial one-dimensional central extension of $Der \mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}]$ is called the Virasoro algebra. It is one of the fundamental objects in representation theory as well as in theoretical physics.

For a positive integer n , the Lie algebra of all differential operators on $\mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}] \otimes \mathbb{C}^n$ has a nontrivial one-dimensional central extension, and the extended Lie algebra is related to the representation theory of affine Lie algebras $[KP]$. It is proved in $[L]$ that this extension is essentially unique (also see $[F]$). When $n = 1$, the Lie algebra of all differential operators on the Laurent polynomial ring $\mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}]$ can also be characterized as the Lie algebra of differential operators on the circle; the corresponding extension is referred to, particularly in the physics literature, as $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$. Some representations of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$ have been studied recently (see, e.g., $[KR]$, $[FKRW]$). In $[FKRW]$, it is shown that some representations of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$ have natural structures of vertex operator algebras (see, e.g., $[Bo]$ and $[FLM]$ for definitions).

Each of these constructions involves the Laurent polynomial algebra $\mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}]$. This algebra is, of course, contained in $\mathbb{C}((t))$, the algebra of formal Laurent series. In this paper, we consider the Lie algebras obtained by replacing $\mathbb{C}[t, t^{-1}]$ by $\mathbb{C}((t))$ in each of these constructions. We show that each of the resulting Lie algebras has an essentially unique nontrivial one-dimensional central extension.

We work over the field of complex numbers, though all results hold over any field of characteristic zero.

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1. SOME BASIC DEFINITIONS

Let L and \hat{L} be two Lie algebras over \mathbb{C} . The Lie algebra \hat{L} is said to be a one-dimensional central extension of L if there is a Lie algebra exact sequence $0 \rightarrow \mathbb{C}c \rightarrow \hat{L} \rightarrow L \rightarrow 0$, where $\mathbb{C}c$ is the one-dimensional trivial Lie algebra and the image of $\mathbb{C}c$ is contained in the center of \hat{L} . It is well-known that \hat{L} is a one-dimensional central extension of L if and only if \hat{L} is the direct sum of L and $\mathbb{C}c$ as vector spaces and the Lie bracket $[\cdot, \cdot]_1$ in \hat{L} is given by

$$\begin{aligned} [x, y]_1 &= [x, y] + \varphi(x, y)c, \\ [x, c]_1 &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

for all $x, y \in L$, where $[\cdot, \cdot]$ is the Lie bracket in L and $\varphi : L \times L \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ is a bilinear form on L satisfying the following conditions:

- (1) (i) $\varphi(x, y) = -\varphi(y, x)$,
(ii) $\varphi([x, y], z) + \varphi([y, z], x) + \varphi([z, x], y) = 0$

for all $x, y, z \in L$. The bilinear form φ is called a 2-cocycle on L . A central extension is trivial if \hat{L} is the direct sum of a subalgebra M and $\mathbb{C}c$ as Lie algebras, where the subalgebra M is isomorphic to L . A 2-cocycle φ corresponding to a trivial central extension is called a 2-coboundary, or a trivial 2-cocycle, and is given by a linear function f from L to \mathbb{C} :

$$\varphi(x, y) = f([x, y])$$

for all $x, y \in L$. The 2-coboundary defined by f is denoted by α_f . The set of all 2-cocycles on L is a vector space, denoted by $Z^2(L, \mathbb{C})$. The set of all 2-coboundaries is a subspace of $Z^2(L, \mathbb{C})$, denoted by $B^2(L, \mathbb{C})$. The quotient space $Z^2(L, \mathbb{C})/B^2(L, \mathbb{C})$ is called the 2nd cohomology group of L with coefficients in \mathbb{C} , and denoted by $H^2(L, \mathbb{C})$. If $\dim H^2(L, \mathbb{C})=1$, we say that L has an essentially unique nontrivial one-dimensional central extension. We say that 2-cocycles φ, ψ are equivalent if $\varphi - \psi$ is a 2-coboundary.

The following two lemmas will be used in the proofs of our main results.

Lemma 1. *Let L be a Lie algebra and S a subset of L such that S spans L and for each $x \in S$, $x = [y_x, z_x]$ for some $y_x, z_x \in L$. If a 2-cocycle φ satisfies $\varphi(y_x, z_x) = 0$ for all $x \in S$, then either $\varphi = 0$ or φ is nontrivial.*

Proof. Suppose that φ is trivial, so that $\varphi = \alpha_f$ for some linear function f . Then for each $x \in S$,

$$f(x) = f([y_x, z_x]) = \varphi(y_x, z_x) = 0.$$

Thus $f = 0$ since S spans L . This implies that $\varphi = \alpha_f = 0$. \square

Lemma 2. *Let L be a Lie algebra and φ a 2-cocycle on L . Suppose there are linear endomorphisms E and F of L such that*

$$\varphi(Ex, y) = \varphi(x, Fy)$$

for all $x, y \in L$, E is surjective and F is locally nilpotent (i.e., for any $y \in L$, there is a positive integer n such that $F^n y = 0$). Then the 2-cocycle φ is 0.

Proof. For $x, y \in L$, let n be a positive integer such that $F^n y = 0$. Since E is surjective, we have $x' \in L$ such that $x = E^n x'$. Thus,

$$\varphi(x, y) = \varphi(E^n x', y) = \varphi(x', F^n y) = 0. \quad \square$$

Let A be a (not necessarily associative) algebra. A linear map $\delta: A \rightarrow A$ is called a derivation, if $\delta(ab) = \delta(a)b + a\delta(b)$ for all $a, b \in A$.

Now consider the algebra of all formal Laurent series

$$\mathbb{C}((t)) = \left\{ \sum_{i \in \mathbb{Z}, i \geq n} a_i t^i \mid a_i \in \mathbb{C}, n \in \mathbb{Z} \right\}.$$

It is known that the set of all derivations on $\mathbb{C}((t))$ is

$$\mathcal{A} = \left\{ f(t) \frac{d}{dt} \mid f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t)) \right\},$$

where $\frac{d}{dt}$ is the formal derivation defined by $\frac{d}{dt}: \mathbb{C}((t)) \rightarrow \mathbb{C}((t))$, $\sum a_i t^i \mapsto \sum i a_i t^{i-1}$. For convenience, we denote $\frac{d}{dt}$ by D and denote $\frac{d}{dt} f(t)$ by $f'(t)$. For $f(t) = \sum a_i t^i \in \mathbb{C}((t))$, define $Res f(t) = a_{-1}$. If $Res f(t) = 0$, we can define the formal integral of $f(t)$ as

$$\sum_{i \neq -1} \frac{a_i}{i+1} t^{i+1},$$

denoted by $\int f(t)$. Then \mathcal{A} is a Lie algebra under the bracket operation:

$$\begin{aligned} & [f(t)D, g(t)D] \\ &= (f(t)D) \circ (g(t)D) - (g(t)D) \circ (f(t)D) \\ &= f(t)g'(t)D - g(t)f'(t)D \end{aligned}$$

for $f(t), g(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$, where the \circ is the composition of operators.

More generally, consider the space of all differential operators on the algebra of formal Laurent series $\mathbb{C}((t))$:

$$\mathcal{B} = \text{span} \left\{ f(t)D^l \mid l \in \mathbb{N}, f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t)) \right\}.$$

\mathcal{B} is a Lie algebra under the bracket operation:

$$\begin{aligned} [f(t)D^l, g(t)D^k] &= (f(t)D^l) \circ (g(t)D^k) - (g(t)D^k) \circ (f(t)D^l) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^l \binom{l}{i} f(t) (D^{l-i} g(t)) D^{k+i} - \sum_{j=0}^k \binom{k}{j} g(t) (D^{k-j} f(t)) D^{l+j}. \end{aligned}$$

Furthermore, we may consider $\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{B} \otimes gl_n(\mathbb{C})$, the space of differential operators on $\mathbb{C}((t)) \otimes \mathbb{C}^n$. Note that $\mathcal{C} \subset End(\mathbb{C}((t)) \otimes \mathbb{C}^n)$. Define the bracket operation on \mathcal{C} by linearity and the commutator

$$\begin{aligned} & [f(t)D^l \otimes A, g(t)D^k \otimes B] \\ &= (f(t)D^l \otimes A) \circ (g(t)D^k \otimes B) - (g(t)D^k \otimes B) \circ (f(t)D^l \otimes A) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^l \binom{l}{i} f(t) (D^{l-i} g(t)) D^{k+i} \otimes AB - \sum_{j=0}^k \binom{k}{j} g(t) (D^{k-j} f(t)) D^{l+j} \otimes BA. \end{aligned}$$

Hence \mathcal{C} is a Lie algebra.

2. MAIN RESULTS AND PROOFS

In this section, we will give our main results and their proofs. In each case we exhibit (using Lemma 1) a nontrivial 2-cocycle on the Lie algebra under consideration. The 2-cocycle is analogous to the standard nontrivial 2-cocycle on the Lie algebra obtained from Laurent polynomial algebra. Then for any given 2-cocycle on the Lie algebra, we reduce the 2-cocycle to a 2-cocycle which is equivalent to the original one and takes value 0 whenever the standard 2-cocycle takes value 0. We use Lemma 2 to show that the reduced 2-cocycle is a multiple of the standard one.

Theorem 1. $\dim H^2(\mathcal{A}, \mathbb{C}) = 1$.

Proof. Let β be a 2-cocycle on \mathcal{A} . Define a linear function $f_\beta : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ by

$$f_\beta(g(t)D) = \beta\left(D, \int g(t)D\right) \quad \text{for } g(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t)), \text{ Res } g(t) = 0$$

and

$$f_\beta(t^{-1}D) = \frac{1}{2}\beta(t^{-1}D, tD).$$

Then $\beta_1 = \beta - \alpha_{f_\beta}$ is a 2-cocycle on \mathcal{A} which is equivalent to β .

$$\text{For } f(t) = \sum_{i \neq 0} a_i t^i \in \mathbb{C}((t)),$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \beta_1(D, f(t)D) \\ &= \beta(D, f(t)D) - f_\beta([D, f(t)D]) \\ (3) \quad &= \beta(D, f(t)D) - f_\beta(f'(t)D) = 0, \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} & \beta_1(t^{-1}D, tD) \\ &= \beta(t^{-1}D, tD) - f_\beta([t^{-1}D, tD]) \\ (4) \quad &= \beta(t^{-1}D, tD) - f_\beta(2t^{-1}D) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

Lemma 3. $\beta_1(D, \mathcal{A}) = 0$ and $\beta_1(tD, \mathcal{A}) = 0$.

Proof of Lemma 3. From (3) and $\beta_1(D, D) = -\beta_1(D, D)$, we have $\beta_1(D, \mathcal{A}) = 0$. For $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$ and $\text{Res } f(t) = 0$,

$$\begin{aligned} & \beta_1(tD, f(t)D) \\ &= \beta_1\left(tD, \left[D, \int f(t)D\right]\right) \\ &= \beta_1\left([tD, D], \int f(t)D\right) + \beta_1\left(D, \left[tD, \int f(t)D\right]\right) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

$\beta_1(tD, \mathcal{A}) = 0$ follows from this and (4). □

Lemma 4. $\beta_1(t^2D, \mathcal{A}) = 0$.

Proof of Lemma 4. For $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$ and $\text{Res } f(t) = 0$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \beta_1(t^2D, f(t)D) \\ &= \beta_1\left(t^2D, \left[D, \int f(t)D\right]\right) \\ &= \beta_1\left([t^2D, D], \int f(t)D\right) + \beta_1\left(D, \left[t^2D, \int f(t)D\right]\right) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

Also

$$\begin{aligned} & \beta_1(t^2D, t^{-1}D) \\ &= \beta_1\left(t^2D, -\frac{1}{2}[tD, t^{-1}D]\right) \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}\beta_1([t^2D, tD], t^{-1}D) - \frac{1}{2}\beta_1(tD, [t^2D, t^{-1}D]) \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}\beta_1(-t^2D, t^{-1}D) = \frac{1}{2}\beta_1(t^2D, t^{-1}D). \end{aligned}$$

This implies that $\beta_1(t^2D, t^{-1}D) = 0$. □

Lemma 5. *If $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$ and $\text{Res } f(t) = 0$, then $\beta_1(t^3D, f(t)D) = 0$.*

Proof of Lemma 5. We have

$$\begin{aligned} & \beta_1(t^3D, f(t)D) \\ &= \beta_1\left(t^3D, \left[D, \int f(t)D\right]\right) \\ &= \beta_1\left([t^3D, D], \int f(t)D\right) + \beta_1\left(D, \left[t^3D, \int f(t)D\right]\right) \\ &= \beta_1\left(-3t^2D, \int f(t)D\right) = 0. \end{aligned} \quad \square$$

Define $\alpha : \mathcal{A} \times \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ by

$$\alpha\left(\sum_i a_i t^{i+1}D, \sum_j b_j t^{j+1}D\right) = \sum_i a_i b_{-i} (i^3 - i)$$

for $\sum_i a_i t^{i+1}D, \sum_j b_j t^{j+1}D \in \mathcal{A}$. Note that the sum on the right-hand side is finite and α is a 2-cocycle on \mathcal{A} . Let S be the subset of \mathcal{A} given by

$$S = \{t^{-1}D\} \cup \left\{f(t)D \in \mathcal{A} \mid \text{Res } f(t) = 0\right\}.$$

Now for $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$, $\text{Res } f(t) = 0$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} t^{-1}D &= \left[\frac{1}{2}t^{-1}D, tD\right], \\ f(t)D &= \left[D, \int f(t)D\right], \\ \alpha(t^{-1}D, tD) &= 0, \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\alpha \left(D, \int f(t)D \right) = 0.$$

Since α is nonzero (in fact, $\alpha(t^3D, t^{-1}D) = 6$), Lemma 1 shows that α is nontrivial. Also $\alpha = \alpha_1$. Applying Lemma 3, Lemma 4 and Lemma 5 to α , we have

$$\alpha(D, \mathcal{A}) = \alpha(tD, \mathcal{A}) = \alpha(t^2D, \mathcal{A}) = 0,$$

and

$$\alpha(t^3D, f(t)D) = 0 \text{ for } f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t)), \text{ Res } f(t) = 0.$$

Suppose that $\beta_1(t^3D, t^{-1}D) = 6r$ for some $r \in \mathbb{C}$. Define $\beta_2 = \beta_1 - r\alpha$; then we have

$$(5) \quad \beta_2(D, \mathcal{A}) = \beta_2(tD, \mathcal{A}) = \beta_2(t^2D, \mathcal{A}) = 0$$

and

$$(6) \quad \beta_2(t^3D, \mathcal{A}) = 0.$$

We now show that $\beta_2 = 0$, completing the proof of Theorem 1. Let $\text{ad}: \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}$, $\text{ad}(a)b = [a, b]$, be the adjoint operator; then

$$\begin{aligned} & \beta_2(\text{ad}D(f(t)D), g(t)D) \\ &= \beta_2([D, f(t)D], g(t)D) \\ &= \beta_2([D, g(t)D], f(t)D) + \beta_2(D, [f(t)D, g(t)D]) \\ (7) \quad &= -\beta_2(f(t)D, \text{ad}D(g(t)D)). \end{aligned}$$

Similarly,

$$(8) \quad \beta_2(\text{ad}(tD)(f(t)D), g(t)D) = -\beta_2(f(t)D, \text{ad}(tD)(g(t)D)),$$

$$(9) \quad \beta_2(\text{ad}(t^3D)(f(t)D), g(t)D) = -\beta_2(f(t)D, \text{ad}(t^3D)(g(t)D)).$$

Now we want to use formulas (7), (8) and (9) to construct two linear endomorphisms E and F on \mathcal{A} so that we can use Lemma 2. Set

$$\begin{aligned} E &= (\text{ad}D)^2\text{ad}(t^3D) - (\text{adt}D)^3 - 3(\text{adt}D)^2 + 4\text{adt}D, \\ F &= -\text{ad}(t^3D)(\text{ad}D)^2 + (\text{adt}D)^3 - 3(\text{adt}D)^2 - 4\text{adt}D. \end{aligned}$$

Then, using (7), (8) and (9), we have

$$(10) \quad \beta_2(E(f(t)D), g(t)D) = \beta_2(f(t)D, F(g(t)D)).$$

For $f(t) = \sum_i a_i t^{i+1}, g(t) = \sum_j b_j t^{j+1} \in \mathbb{C}((t))$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} & (\text{ad}D)^2 \text{ad}(t^3 D)(f(t)D) \\ &= [D, [D, [t^3 D, f(t)D]]] \\ &= \left[D, \left[D, \sum_i (i-2)a_i t^{i+3} D \right] \right] \\ &= \left[D, \sum_i (i-2)(i+3)a_i t^{i+2} D \right] \\ &= \sum_i (i-2)(i+3)(i+2)a_i t^{i+1} D \\ &= \sum_i (i^3 + 3i^2 - 4i - 12)a_i t^{i+1} D. \end{aligned}$$

Also

$$(\text{ad}tD)^k(f(t)D) = \sum_i i^k a_i t^{i+1} D$$

for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$. This implies that $E(f(t)D) = -12f(t)D$ for all $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$. Thus E is invertible. Similarly, for $g(t) = \sum_j b_j t^{j+1} \in \mathbb{C}((t))$, we have

$$-\text{ad}(t^3 D)(\text{ad}D)^2(g(t)D) = \sum_j (-j^3 + 3j^2 + 4j)b_j t^{j+1} D.$$

Thus $F(g(t)D) = 0$ for all $g(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$. From Lemma 2, we have $\beta_2 = 0$ or $\beta_1 = r\alpha$. □

Theorem 2. $\dim H^2(\mathcal{B}, \mathbb{C}) = 1$.

Proof. For any 2-cocycle ψ on \mathcal{B} , define

$$f_\psi(g(t)D^l) = -\frac{1}{l+1} \psi(t, g(t)D^{l+1})$$

for $g(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$. Then $\psi_1 = \psi - \alpha_{f_\psi}$ is a 2-cocycle and equivalent to ψ . We have

$$\psi_1(t, g(t)D^{l+1}) = 0$$

for all $g(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$ and $l \in \mathbb{N}$.

Lemma 6. *If $g(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$ and $\text{Res } g(t) = 0$, then $\psi_1(t, g(t)) = 0$.*

Proof of Lemma 6. For $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$ and $\text{Res } f(t) = 0$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \psi_1(t, f(t)) \\ &= \psi_1([tD, t], f(t)) \\ &= \psi_1(tD, [t, f(t)]) + \psi_1([tD, f(t)], t) \\ &= -\psi_1(t, tf'(t)). \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, $\psi_1(t, f(t) + tf'(t)) = 0$. Note that every element $g(t)$ in $\mathbb{C}((t))$ with $\text{Res } g(t) = 0$ can be written in the form $f(t) + tf'(t)$ for some $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$ with $\text{Res } f(t) = 0$. □

Define $\varphi : \mathcal{B} \times \mathcal{B} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$,

$$\varphi \left(\sum_m a_m t^{l+m} D^l, \sum_n b_n t^{k+n} D^k \right) = \sum_m a_m b_{-m} (-1)^l l! k! \binom{m+l}{l+k+1}.$$

Then φ is a 2-cocycle on \mathcal{B} . Let S be the subset of \mathcal{B} given by

$$S = \left\{ f(t)D^l \mid l \in \mathbb{N}, f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t)) \right\}.$$

For any $l \in \mathbb{N}$ and $f(t) \in \mathbb{C}((t))$,

$$f(t)D^l = -\frac{1}{l+1} [t, f(t)D^{l+1}]$$

and

$$\varphi(t, f(t)D^{l+1}) = 0.$$

From Lemma 1 and the fact that $\varphi(t, t^{-1}) = 1$, we have that φ is nontrivial. If $\psi_1(t, t^{-1}) = s$, we define $\psi_2 = \psi_1 - s\varphi$. Then using Lemma 6, we have $\psi_2(t, \mathcal{B}) = 0$. Note that

$$\begin{aligned} & \psi_2(\text{adt}(f(t)D^l), g(t)D^k) \\ &= \psi_2([t, f(t)D^l], g(t)D^k) \\ &= \psi_2([t, g(t)D^k], f(t)D^l) + \psi_2(t, [f(t)D^l, g(t)D^k]) \\ (11) \quad &= -\psi_2(f(t)D^l, \text{adt}(g(t)D^k)). \end{aligned}$$

For $f(t) = \sum_m a_m t^{l+m} \in \mathbb{C}((t))$,

$$[t, f(t)D^l] = -lf(t)D^{l-1}.$$

Therefore the operator adt is surjective and locally nilpotent. Let $E = \text{ad } t$ and $F = -\text{ad } t$. From equation (11) and Lemma 2, we have $\psi_2 = 0$. This gives $\psi_1 = s\varphi$. □

Remark. This method gives a simplified proof of Theorem 2.1 of [L].

Consider the Lie algebra $\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{B} \otimes gl_n(\mathbb{C})$. Define a bilinear map $\phi : \mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ by

$$\begin{aligned} & \phi \left(\sum_m a_m t^{l+m} D^l \otimes A, \sum_n b_n t^{k+n} D^k \otimes B \right) \\ &= \sum_m a_m b_{-m} (-1)^l l! k! \binom{m+l}{l+k+1} \text{tr}(AB) \end{aligned}$$

for $\sum_m a_m t^{l+m}, \sum_n b_n t^{k+n} \in \mathbb{C}((t))$, $l, k \in \mathbb{N}$ and $A, B \in gl_n(\mathbb{C})$. Then ϕ is a 2-cocycle on \mathcal{C} . Using a method similar to the proof of Theorem 2.2 of [L], we have

Corollary. $\dim H^2(\mathcal{C}, \mathbb{C}) = 1$.

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