# An algebraists view of the multinomial coefficients 

Pablo S. Ocal<br>Texas A\&M University

February 16th, 2019

## Outline

(1) Historical introduction
(2) Definitions and interpretations
(3) The multinomial coefficients are natural numbers
4) Conclusion

## Where did they appear?

(1) Pingala wrote "Chandasastra" around the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.
(2) Halayudha wrote "Mrtasanjivani" around the 10th century.
(3) Bhaskaracharya wrote "Lilavati" in 1150 .
(9) Pascal wrote "Traite du triangle arithmetique" in 1653.
(5) Andreas von Ettingshausen introduced the modern notation in 1826.
serfoiebener Elemente obne sBieterbotungen für bie kte Slaffe jul fuden, wobei $k$ nie gróger feyn fann, als n.

Da mir im gelgenten febr bäuf̄g Gelegenbeit baben wer: ben, don bem numerificen Zusbructe biefer MRenge Gebraud zu maben, fo wollen mir bafúr das zeiden $\binom{n}{k}$ wäblen, unb es mit ben sigorten $n$ über $k$ ausfipreden, wobei bie obere Sabl fett bie Anjabl ber combinirten Elemente, vie untere aber ben ケang ber Combinationsflaffe angitt.
gran bente fid alle Gombinationen ver $n$ Elemente gur nádftoorbergebenten (k-1)ten stlaffe gebittet, unb jebe eins jelne ber biebei ©tatt finbenben $(k-1)$ ( $n$ omplerionen, mit jebem ber in ifr nidt vortommenben $n-(k-1)$ Elemente verbunten, fo ergeben fíd $\binom{n}{n}[n-(k-1)]$ ©omples rionen, welde fämmtlid ber kten §laffe angebören, unb unter welden jebe Denfbare ©ombination biefer slaffe genau kmal erfdeint. Sebe (Sombination ber liten Slaffe Eann námfid, indem man fid ftets ein anteres ibrer Elemente bavon getrennt votfellt, auf $k$ verídietene $\mathbf{Z r t e n}^{\text {turd }} \mathfrak{\text { Bereinigung ciner }}$ $(k-1)$ fielligen Complerion mit einem einfaden Elemente erjeugt werben; welde aud immer biefe (k-1) fellige (Somplerion fey, fo mugte fie fid jebesimat unter obigen Sombination nen ber $(k-1)$ ten slaffe befinden, und indem fie mit allen in ibr nidt vortommenben $n-(k-1)$ Elementen $\mathfrak{B e r b i n b u n g e n ~}$ einging, auф jenes eingelne Efement mit aufnebmen. Es if bemnad bie $\mathrm{Zu}_{\mathrm{n}}$ abl afler verfdiebenen Gombinationen von n Elementen bur kten Slaffe

$$
\binom{n}{k}=\binom{n}{k-i} \cdot \frac{n-(k-1)}{k} .
$$

ardein in ber erften Combinationstlaffe felegt jedes Element blof einjeln, daber ift $\binom{\mathrm{n}}{1}=n$, alfo für

$$
\begin{aligned}
& k=2,\binom{n}{3} \\
& k=\binom{n}{1} \cdot \frac{n-1}{2}=\frac{n(n-1)}{1 \cdot(2} \\
& k=3,\binom{n}{3} \\
& k=4,\binom{n}{2} \cdot \frac{n-2}{3}=\frac{n(n-1)(n-2)}{2 \cdot}=\binom{n}{3} \cdot \frac{n-3}{4}=\frac{n(n-1)(n-2)(n-3)}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot} 3 \cdot 4 \\
& \text { u.f.w. }
\end{aligned}
$$

unb allgemein

$$
\binom{n}{k}=\frac{n(n-1)(n-2)(n-3) \ldots[n-(k-1)]}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot}
$$

Beifpiel. Sür bie gewögnlide 及ablen= \&otterie ju go
Nummern if
Die $\mathrm{Zn}_{\mathrm{b}} \mathrm{abl}$ aller mägliden $\mathrm{Kmben}^{2}$

$$
=\frac{90.89}{1.3}=4005 ;
$$

Die $\mathrm{Zn}_{\mathbf{z}} \mathrm{abl}$ ber $\mathfrak{Z}$ ernen

$$
=\frac{90.89 .88}{1.3 .3}=117480 ;
$$

Die $\mathfrak{Z n f}_{\mathbf{z}}$ abt ber Quaternen

$$
=\frac{00.89 .88 .87}{1.2 \cdot 3 \cdot 4}=2555 ı 90 ;
$$

enblid bie $2 \mathrm{In}_{\mathrm{z}} \mathrm{abl}$ ber Quinternen

$$
=\frac{90 \cdot 89 \cdot 88 \cdot 87 \cdot 86}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 \cdot 4 \cdot 5}=43949268
$$

3 weiter $\mathcal{F}$ alf. Es if bie $2\left(n_{\text {gabi }}\right.$ ber Combinationen von $n$ Elementen zur kten slaffe mit uneingeidränten \#3ies berbolungen fu beftimmen, wobei $k$ fo grok feyn Eann, als man will.

Man bexeidne bie verlangte $\mathcal{U}_{n \neq}$ abl einftweiten burd $\mathbf{C}_{\mathbf{k}}$, unb denfe fid alle (Gombinationen mit $\mathfrak{W}$ Biederbolungen ter ger gebenen $n$ (Elemente gur nädfoorbergebenben ( $k-1$ )ten slaffe gebitbet, fo wirb Die $\mathrm{Z}_{\mathrm{n}} \mathrm{abl}$ Derfelben, ter angenommenen $B_{e r}$ geidnung gemäß, burd $\mathrm{C}_{\mathrm{k}-1}$ vorgeftella.' Nan verbinde jebe

## Combinatorial definitions

## Definition

The binomial coefficient $n$ over $k$, denoted $\binom{n}{k}$, is the number of subsets of $k$ distinct elements that can be obtained from a set of $n$ elements.

## Definition

The binomial coefficient $n+1$ over $k$, denoted $\binom{n+1}{k}$, is the number of strings consisting of $k$ ones and $n$ zeros such that no two ones are adjacent.

Clearly we have $\binom{n}{k} \in \mathbb{N}$.

## Factorial definition

## Definition

The binomial coefficient $n$ over $k$, for $k \leq n$, is:

$$
\binom{n}{k}=\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!} .
$$

## Definition

The multinomial coefficient, for $n=k_{1}+\cdots+k_{m}$, is:

$$
\binom{n}{k_{1}, \cdots, k_{m}}=\frac{n!}{k_{1}!\cdots k_{m}!} .
$$

## The Binomial and Multinomial Theorem

A classic result immediately proves $\binom{n}{k} \in \mathbb{N}$.

## Theorem (Binomial Theorem)

Given $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have:

$$
(x+y)^{n}=\sum_{k=0}^{n}\binom{n}{k} x^{n-1} y^{k}
$$

And a generalization immediately proves $\binom{n}{k_{1}, \ldots, k_{m}} \in \mathbb{N}$.

## Theorem (Multinomial Theorem)

Given $n, m \in \mathbb{N}$ we have:

$$
\left(x_{1}+\cdots+x_{m}\right)^{n}=\sum_{k_{1}+\cdots+k_{m}}\binom{n}{k_{1}, \cdots, k_{m}} x_{1}^{k_{1}} \cdots x_{m}^{k_{m}} .
$$

## Direct proofs (I)

A combinatorial approach:

## Proposition

Given $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have:

$$
(1+x)^{n}=\sum_{k=0}^{n}\binom{n}{k} x^{k}
$$

## Proof.

We have $(1+x)$ multiplied $n$ times. For any $k \leq n$, to obtain $x^{k}$ we pick $k$ factors with $x$ (out of the $n$ possible), and for the remaining $n-k$ we pick 1.

Hence $\binom{n}{k} \in \mathbb{N}$.

## Direct proofs (II)

An iterative approach:

## Proposition (Pascal's rule)

Given $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have that for $0<k<n$ :

$$
\binom{n}{k}=\binom{n-1}{k-1}+\binom{n-1}{k}
$$

## Proof.

Left as exercise.
And since $\binom{n}{0}=1=\binom{n}{n}$, we have $\binom{n}{k} \in \mathbb{N}$.

## Pascal's rule proof

## Proof.

$$
\begin{aligned}
\binom{n}{k}+\binom{n}{k-1} & =\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}+\frac{n!}{(k-1)!(n-k+1)!} \\
& =\frac{n!(n+1-k)}{k!(n+1-k)!}+\frac{n!k}{k!(n+1-k)!} \\
& =\frac{n!(n+1-k+k)}{k!(n+1-k)!}=\frac{n!(n+1)}{k!(n+1-k)!} \\
& =\frac{(n+1)!}{k!(n+1-k)!}=\binom{n+1}{k} .
\end{aligned}
$$

## Direct proofs (and III)

## Theorem

Given $n, k_{1}, \ldots, k_{m} \in \mathbb{N}$ with $n=k_{1}+\cdots+k_{m}$ we have that $\binom{n}{k_{1}, \ldots, k_{m}} \in \mathbb{N}$.

## Proof.

## Direct proofs (and III)

## Theorem

Given $n, k_{1}, \ldots, k_{m} \in \mathbb{N}$ with $n=k_{1}+\cdots+k_{m}$ we have that $\binom{n}{k_{1}, \ldots, k_{m}} \in \mathbb{N}$.

## Proof.

We have a natural inclusion $S_{k_{1}} \times \cdots \times S_{k_{m}} \subset S_{n}$. Then by Lagrange's Theorem $k_{1}!\cdots k_{m}!=\left|S_{k_{1}} \times \cdots \times S_{k_{m}}\right|$ divides $\left|S_{n}\right|=n!$.

## Tiny prerequisites

For two sets $X$ and $Y$, we have $|X \times Y|=|X||Y|$. Moreover, $\left|S_{n}\right|=n!$. The natural inclusion:

$$
\begin{array}{rlc}
S_{k_{1}} \times \cdots \times S_{k_{m}} & \longrightarrow & S_{n} \\
\left(\sigma_{1}, \ldots, \sigma_{m}\right) & \longmapsto & \sigma_{1} \ldots \sigma_{m}
\end{array}
$$

where $\sigma_{i}$ acts on the components ranging from $k_{1}+\cdots+k_{i-1}+1$ to $k_{1}+\cdots+k_{i}, i=1, \ldots, m$, is a group homomorphism.

## Theorem (Lagrange's Theorem)

Given a finite group $G$ and any subgroup $H$, then $|H|$ divides $|G|$.

## Conclusion

Non trivial results can be used to prove concepts in a beautiful way.

## Thank you!

[^0]
[^0]:    

