

# ON TRIPLY-GENERATED TELESCOPIC SEMIGROUPS AND CHAINS OF SEMIGROUPS

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ABSTRACT. Given a numerical semigroup  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu \rangle$  in canonical form, let  $M(S) := S \setminus \{0\}$ . Define associated numerical semigroups  $B(S) := \{x \in \mathbb{N}_0 : x + M(S) \subseteq M(S)\}$  and  $L(S) := \langle a_1, a_2 - a_1, \dots, a_\nu - a_1 \rangle$ . Set  $B_0(S) = S$ , and for  $i \geq 1$ , define  $B_i(S) := B(B_{i-1}(S))$ . Similarly, set  $L_0(S) = S$ , and for  $i \geq 1$ , define  $L_i(S) := L(L_{i-1}(S))$ . These constructions define finite ascending chains of semigroups  $S = B_0(S) \subseteq B_1(S) \subseteq \dots \subseteq B_{\beta(S)}(S) = \mathbb{N}_0$  and  $S = L_0(S) \subseteq L_1(S) \subseteq \dots \subseteq L_{\lambda(S)}(S) = \mathbb{N}_0$ . It is shown that if  $S$  is a triply-generated telescopic semigroup, then  $B_j(S) = L_1(S)$  for some  $j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq \beta(S)$ . From this, it follows that certain triply-generated telescopic semigroups  $S$  satisfy  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for all  $0 \leq i \leq \beta(S)$ .

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A *numerical semigroup* is a submonoid of the monoid  $\mathbb{N}_0$  of non-negative integers under addition. It is well known that each numerical semigroup is finitely generated. More precisely, given a numerical semigroup  $S$ , there exist  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu \rangle$ ; that is  $S = \{\sum_{i=1}^{\nu} c_i a_i : c_i \in \mathbb{N}_0\}$ . We adopt the conventions of [1] and [2]. In particular, we will consider those numerical semigroups  $S$  with the property that the set of elements of  $S$  has greatest common divisor 1. (Note that while not every numerical semigroup satisfies this property, every numerical semigroup is isomorphic to one that does.) Then each numerical semigroup  $S$  has a *canonical form* description so that  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu \rangle$  where  $a_1 < a_2 < \dots < a_\nu$ ,  $a_j \notin \langle \{a_i : 1 \leq i \leq \nu, i \neq j\} \rangle$  for all  $1 \leq j \leq \nu$ , and  $\gcd\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu\} = 1$ . The *embedding dimension* of  $S$ , denoted  $e(S)$ , is the number of generators of  $S$  in its canonical form description; that is,  $e(S) = \nu$ . It can be shown that  $e(S) \leq a_1$ . Thus, a numerical semigroup is said to be of *maximal embedding dimension* if  $e(S) = a_1$ , the least positive element of  $S$ . The assumption that  $\gcd\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu\} = 1$  ensures that  $\mathbb{N}_0 \setminus S$  is finite. The *Frobenius number* of  $S$ , denoted  $g(S)$ , is the largest integer in  $\mathbb{N}_0 \setminus S$ .

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Suppose  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu \rangle$  is a canonical form description of a numerical semigroup  $S$ . Let  $M := S \setminus \{0\}$ . One may consider associated numerical semigroups

$$B(S) := \{x \in \mathbb{N}_0 : x + M \subseteq M\}$$

and

$$L(S) := \langle a_1, a_2 - a_1, \dots, a_\nu - a_1 \rangle.$$

Clearly,  $S \subseteq B(S)$  and  $S \subseteq L(S)$ . It is also not hard to see that  $B(S) \subseteq L(S)$  since  $x \in B(S)$  implies  $x + a_1 = \sum_{i=1}^\nu c_i a_i$  for some  $c_i \in \mathbb{N}_0$ . As in [1], one may iterate the  $B$  and  $L$  constructions to obtain two ascending chains of numerical semigroups

$$B_0(S) := S \subseteq B_1(S) := B(B_0(S)) \subseteq \dots \subseteq B_{h+1}(S) := B(B_h(S)) \subseteq \dots$$

and

$$L_0(S) := S \subseteq L_1(S) := L(L_0(S)) \subseteq \dots \subseteq L_{h+1}(S) := L(L_h(S)) \subseteq \dots$$

Note that  $S \subsetneq B(S)$  and  $S \subsetneq L(S)$  for all numerical semigroups  $S \neq \mathbb{N}_0$ . This, together with the fact that  $\mathbb{N}_0 \setminus S$  is finite, implies that there exist smallest non-negative integers  $\beta(S)$  and  $\lambda(S)$  such that  $B_{\beta(S)}(S) = \mathbb{N}_0 = L_{\lambda(S)}(S)$ . Thus, the  $B$  and  $L$  constructions give rise to finite strictly increasing chains of numerical semigroups. Since  $B_0(S) = S = L_0(S)$ ,  $B_1(S) \subseteq L_1(S)$ , and  $B_{\beta(S)}(S) = \mathbb{N}_0 = L_{\lambda(S)}(S)$ , it is natural to compare the two chains. In particular, it is natural to ask, as in [1], if  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for all  $0 \leq i \leq \beta(S)$ . In [2], we show that while this containment does not hold for all numerical semigroups  $S$ , it does hold if  $S$  is a doubly-generated semigroup  $\langle a_1, a_2 \rangle$ .

This brings us to the focus of this work. Doubly-generated semigroups  $S = \langle a_1, a_2 \rangle$  are examples of so-called telescopic semigroups. A numerical semigroup  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu \rangle$  in canonical form is *telescopic* if  $\frac{a_i}{d_i} \in S_{i-1}$  for all  $2 \leq i \leq \nu$ , where  $d_i := \gcd\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_i\}$  and  $S_i := \langle \frac{a_1}{d_i}, \frac{a_2}{d_i}, \dots, \frac{a_i}{d_i} \rangle$ . In this paper, we consider triply-generated telescopic semigroups; that is, numerical semigroups  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, a_3 \rangle$  such that  $a_3 \in \langle \frac{a_1}{d}, \frac{a_2}{d} \rangle$  where  $d := \gcd\{a_1, a_2\}$ . The main result, Theorem 2.3, states that for such  $S$ ,  $B_{\frac{a_1}{d} + d - 2}(S) = L_1(S)$ . It follows immediately that  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for  $0 \leq i \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 2$ . As a consequence, we see in Corollary 2.4 that for certain triply-generated telescopic semigroups  $S$ ,  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for all  $0 \leq i \leq \beta(S)$ .

For background on numerical semigroups, see [4], [1]. For background on telescopic semigroups, see [3].

## 2. RESULTS

We collect some results on numerical semigroups from [1] that will be used in the proof of the main result. Recall that a numerical semigroup  $S$

is *symmetric* if the map  $S \cap \{0, 1, \dots, g(S)\} \rightarrow (\mathbb{N}_0 \setminus S) \cap \{0, 1, \dots, g(S)\}$  defined by  $s \mapsto g(S) - s$  is a bijection.

**Proposition 2.1.** *Let  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu \rangle$  be a numerical semigroup in canonical form. Then:*

- (a)  $g(B_1(S)) = g(S) - a_1$ .
- (b) *If  $S$  is symmetric, then  $B_1(S) = \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_\nu, g(S) \rangle$ .*
- (c)  *$S$  is of maximal embedding dimension if and only if  $B_1(S) = L_1(S)$ .*

The next proposition contains some useful results on telescopic semigroups from [3].

**Proposition 2.2.** (a) *Suppose  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, a_3 \rangle$  is a canonical form description of a numerical semigroup  $S$ . If  $S$  is telescopic, then  $g(S) = \frac{a_1 a_2}{d} + (d-1)a_3 - a_1 - a_2$  where  $d := \gcd\{a_1, a_2\}$ .*

(b) *If a numerical semigroup  $S$  is telescopic, then  $S$  is symmetric.*

**Theorem 2.3.** *If  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, a_3 \rangle$  is a telescopic semigroup and  $d := \gcd\{a_1, a_2\}$ , then  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for  $0 \leq i \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 2$ . Moreover,  $B_{\frac{a_1}{d} + d - 2}(S) = L_1(S)$ .*

*Proof.* It will be convenient to write  $B_i$  and  $L_i$  instead of  $B_i(S)$  and  $L_i(S)$ , respectively. Let  $g := g(S)$  and  $d := \gcd\{a_1, a_2\}$ . According to Proposition 2.2(a),

$$g(S) = \frac{a_1 a_2}{d} + (d-1)a_3 - a_1 - a_2.$$

Much of the proof is devoted to proving the claim that if  $1 \leq i \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3$ , then

$$B_i = \langle \{a_1, a_2, a_3\} \cup T_i \rangle$$

where

$$T_i := \left\{ \begin{array}{l} g - r_1 a_1 - r_2 a_2 - r_3 a_3 : \quad r_1 + r_2 + r_3 = i - 1, \\ \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad 0 \leq r_1 \leq i - 1, \\ \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad 0 \leq r_2 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} - 1, \\ \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad 0 \leq r_3 \leq d - 1 \end{array} \right\}.$$

First, we establish the claim in the case  $i = 1$ . According to Proposition 2.2(b),  $S$  is symmetric since  $S$  is telescopic. This implies that  $B_1 = \langle a_1, a_2, a_3, g \rangle$  by Proposition 2.1(b). It follows that  $B_1 = \langle a_1, a_2, a_3 \rangle \cup T_1$  as  $T_1 = \{g\}$ , and the claim holds in the case  $i = 1$ .

We now proceed by induction on  $i \geq 1$ . Suppose the claim holds for all  $j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq i - 1$ ; that is, assume that  $B_j = \langle \{a_1, a_2, a_3\} \cup T_j \rangle$  for all  $j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq i - 1$ . By definition of  $B_i$ , to show that  $\langle \{a_1, a_2, a_3\} \cup T_i \rangle \subseteq B_i$ , it suffices to show that  $T_i \subseteq B_i$ . Let  $x \in T_i$ . Then

$$x := g - r_1 a_1 - r_2 a_2 - r_3 a_3,$$

where  $r_1 + r_2 + r_3 = i - 1$ ,  $0 \leq r_1 \leq i - 1$ ,  $0 \leq r_2 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} - 1$ , and  $0 \leq r_3 \leq d - 1$ . We must show that  $x + B_{i-1} \subseteq B_{i-1}$ . Since  $B_{i-1} = \langle \{a_1, a_2, a_3\} \cup T_{i-1} \rangle$

by the induction hypothesis, it suffices to show that  $x + S \subseteq B_{i-1}$  and  $x + T_{i-1} \subseteq B_{i-1}$ . Note that  $x + a_1 = g - (r_1 - 1)a_1 - r_2a_2 - r_3a_3$ . If  $0 < r_1 \leq i - 1$ , then  $x + a_1 \in T_{i-1}$ . If  $r_1 = 0$ , then  $x + a_1 = g + a_1 - r_2a_2 - r_3a_3 = (\frac{a_1}{d} - 1 - r_2)a_2 + (d - 1 - r_3)a_3 \in S$ . Thus,  $x + a_1 \in B_{i-1}$ . Similarly, one may check that  $x + a_2, x + a_3 \in B_{i-1}$ . Then  $x + S \subseteq B_{i-1}$ .

It remains to show that  $x + T_{i-1} \subseteq B_{i-1}$ . Let  $y \in T_{i-1}$ . Then

$$y := g - l_1a_1 - l_2a_2 - l_3a_3,$$

where  $l_1 + l_2 + l_3 = i - 2$ ,  $0 \leq l_1 \leq i - 2$ ,  $0 \leq l_2 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} - 1$ , and  $0 \leq l_3 \leq d - 1$ . We will show that  $x + y \in B_{i-1}$ . Notice that  $x + y$

$$\begin{aligned} &= g - r_1a_1 - r_2a_2 - r_3a_3 + g - l_1a_1 - l_2a_2 - l_3a_3 \\ &= g - (r_1 + l_1 + 1)a_1 - (r_2 + l_2 - (\frac{a_1}{d} - 1))a_2 - (r_3 + l_3 - (d - 1))a_3. \end{aligned}$$

If  $r_1 + l_1 \leq i - 3$ , then  $(r_1 + l_1 + 1) + (r_2 + l_2 - (\frac{a_1}{d} - 1)) + (r_3 + l_3 - (d - 1)) = (r_1 + r_2 + r_3) + (l_1 + l_2 + l_3) - (\frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3) = (i - 1) + (i - 2) - (\frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3) \leq i - 1 + i - 2 - i = i - 3$  and  $0 \leq r_1 + l_1 + 1 \leq i - 2$ . Since  $0 \leq r_2, l_2 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} - 1$ ,  $0 \leq r_2 + l_2 - (\frac{a_1}{d} - 1) \leq \frac{a_1}{d} - 1$ . Since  $0 \leq r_3, l_3 \leq d - 1$ ,  $0 \leq r_3 + l_3 - (d - 1) \leq d - 1$ . By definition of  $T_{i-1}$ , this implies that  $x + y \in T_{i-1} \subseteq B_{i-1}$  in the case  $r_1 + l_1 \leq i - 3$ .

We now assume that  $r_1 + l_1 \geq i - 2$ . Notice that  $x + y > g(B_{i-1})$  implies  $x + y \in B_{i-1}$ . Thus, we only need to consider the case in which  $x + y \leq g(B_{i-1})$ . Repeated applications of Proposition 2.1(a) lead to  $g(B_{i-1}) = g - (i - 1)a_1$  since  $a_1 < g - (\frac{a_1}{d} - 3)a_2 - (d - 1)a_3 \leq z$  for all  $z \in T_{i-1}$ . Thus,  $x + y \leq g - (i - 1)a_1$ . This implies

$$(1) \quad A_2a_2 + A_3a_3 \leq A_1a_1,$$

where  $A_1 := r_1 + l_1 - (i - 2)$ ,  $A_2 := \frac{a_1}{d} - 1 - (r_2 + l_2)$ , and  $A_3 := d - 1 - (r_3 + l_3)$ . Note that

$$A_2 + A_3 > A_1.$$

Otherwise,  $A_2 + A_3 \leq A_1$ , which implies that

$$\frac{a_1}{d} - 1 - (r_2 + l_2) + d - 1 - (r_3 + l_3) \leq r_1 + l_1 - (i - 2).$$

As a result,  $\frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3 + i - 2 \leq (r_1 + r_2 + r_3) + (l_1 + l_2 + l_3) = i - 1 + i - 1$ , and so  $\frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3 \leq i - 2$ . This contradicts the fact that  $1 \leq i \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3$ . If  $A_2 \leq 0$ , then  $a_2 < a_3$  implies that  $A_2a_2 \geq A_2a_3$ . Then (1) gives

$$(A_2 + A_3)a_3 \leq A_2a_2 + A_3a_3 \leq A_1a_1 \leq A_1a_3.$$

It follows that  $A_2 + A_3 \leq A_1$ , which is a contradiction. Thus,  $A_2 > 0$ . If  $A_3 \geq 0$ , then  $(A_2 + A_3)a_1 \leq A_2a_2 + A_3a_3 \leq A_1a_1$ . This implies  $A_2 + A_3 \leq A_1$ , which is a contradiction.

Thus, we have reduced to the case where  $A_1 \geq 0$ ,  $A_2 > 0$ , and  $A_3 < 0$ ; that is,  $r_1 + l_1 \geq i - 2$ ,  $\frac{a_1}{d} - 1 > r_2 + l_2$ , and  $r_3 + l_3 > d - 1$ . Then  $x + y$

$$\begin{aligned} &= g - r_1a_1 - r_2a_2 - r_3a_3 + g - l_1a_1 - l_2a_2 - l_3a_3 \\ &= g - (r_1 + l_1 - \frac{a_1}{d} + 1)a_1 - (r_2 + l_2 + 1)a_2 - (r_3 + l_3 - (d - 1))a_3. \end{aligned}$$



we conclude that  $e(B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3}) = 3 + (a_1 - 3) = a_1$ . Therefore,  $B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3}$  is of maximal embedding dimension.

By Proposition 2.1(c), since  $B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3}$  is of maximal embedding dimension, we have that  $B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-2} =$

$$B(B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3}) = L(B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3}) = \langle \{a_1, a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1\} \cup T'_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3} \rangle,$$

where  $T'_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3} :=$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} g - r_1 a_1 - r_2 a_2 - r_3 a_3 - a_1 : \\ \quad r_1 + r_2 + r_3 = \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3 - 1, \\ \quad 0 \leq r_1 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 3 - 1, \\ \quad 0 \leq r_2 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} - 1, \\ \quad 0 \leq r_3 \leq d - 1 \end{array} \right\}.$$

In particular,

$$L_1 = \langle a_1, a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1 \rangle \subseteq B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-2}.$$

We claim that  $L_1 = B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-2}$ . To show this, we must show that  $T'_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3} \subseteq \langle a_1, a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1 \rangle = L_1$ .

Let  $z \in T'_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3}$ . Then  $z = g - (r_1 + 1)a_1 - r_2 a_2 - r_3 a_3$ , where  $r_1 + r_2 + r_3 = \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 4$ ,  $0 \leq r_1 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 4$ ,  $0 \leq r_2 \leq \frac{a_1}{d} - 1$ , and  $0 \leq r_3 \leq d - 1$ . Substituting for  $g$  yields  $z = (\frac{a_1}{d} - r_1 - 1)(a_2 - a_1) + (d - r_3 - 1)(a_3 - a_1) \in \langle a_1, a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1 \rangle$ . This gives  $T'_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3} \subseteq L_1$ , which leads to

$$B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-2} = \langle \{a_1, a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1\} \cup T'_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-3} \rangle = L_1.$$

Since  $B_i(S) \subseteq B_{i+1}(S)$  for all  $i \geq 0$  and  $B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-2} = L_1$ , we have

$$B_0 \subseteq B_1 \subseteq B_2 \subseteq \cdots \subseteq B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-2} = L_1.$$

Since  $L_i(S) \subseteq L_{i+1}(S)$  for all  $i \geq 0$ , this implies that  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_1(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for all  $0 \leq i \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 2$ .  $\square$

**Corollary 2.4.** *If  $S = \langle a_1, a_2, a_3 \rangle$  is a telescopic semigroup and  $a_1 \in \langle a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1 \rangle$ , then  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for all  $0 \leq i \leq \beta(S)$ .*

To prove this corollary, we will use the following result from [2].

**Proposition 2.5.** *Let  $S$  be a numerical semigroup of embedding dimension  $e(S) = 2$ ; that is,  $S = \langle a_1, a_2 \rangle$  where  $a_1$  and  $a_2$  are relatively prime natural numbers greater than 1. Then  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for all  $0 \leq i \leq \beta(S)$ .*

*Proof of Corollary 2.4.* As before, let  $d := \gcd\{a_1, a_2\}$ . Then  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for  $0 \leq i \leq \frac{a_1}{d} + d - 2$  by Theorem 2.3. In addition,  $B_{\frac{a_1}{d}+d-2}(S) = L_1(S)$ . By definition,

$$L_1(S) = \langle a_1, a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1 \rangle = \langle a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1 \rangle$$

since  $a_1 \in \langle a_2 - a_1, a_3 - a_1 \rangle$ . The fact that  $B_i(S) \subseteq L_i(S)$  for  $\frac{a_1}{d} + d - 2 < i \leq \beta(S)$  now follows immediately from Proposition 2.5 since  $L_1$  is doubly-generated.  $\square$

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