A COUNTEREXAMPLE FOR SUBADDITIVITY OF MULTIPLIER IDEALS ON TORIC VARIETIES

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We construct a 3-dimensional complete intersection toric variety on which the subadditivity formula doesn’t hold, answering negatively a question by Takagi and Watanabe. A combinatorial proof of the subadditivity formula on 2-dimensional normal toric varieties is also provided.

Key Words: Multiplier ideals; Subadditivity formula; Toric varieties.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Demailly et al. [2] proved the subadditivity theorem for multiplier ideals on smooth complex varieties, which states

$$\mathcal{J}(\alpha \beta) \subseteq \mathcal{J}(\alpha) \mathcal{J}(\beta).$$

This theorem is responsible for several applications of multiplier ideals in commutative algebra, in particular to symbolic powers [3] and Abhyankar valuations [4].

In a later article, Takagi and Watanabe [9] investigated the extent to which the subadditivity theorem remains true on singular varieties. They showed that on $\mathbb{Q}$-Gorenstein normal surfaces, the subadditivity formula holds if and only if the variety is log terminal [9, Theorem 2.2]. Furthermore, they gave an example of a $\mathbb{Q}$-Gorenstein normal toric threefold on which the formula is not satisfied [9, Example 3.2]. This led Takagi and Watanabe to ask the following question.

**Question 1.1.** Let $R$ be a Gorenstein toric ring and $\alpha, \beta$ be monomial ideals of $R$. Is it true that

$$\mathcal{J}(\alpha \beta) \subseteq \mathcal{J}(\alpha) \mathcal{J}(\beta)?$$
The purpose of this article is to provide a counterexample to Question 1.1. We will also give, in Section 4, a combinatorial proof of the subadditivity formula on any 2-dimensional normal toric rings. The standard notation and facts in [5] will be used freely in the presentation.

2. MULTIPLIER IDEALS ON TORIC VARIETIES

Let \( K \) be a field and \( R = \mathbb{K}[M \cap \sigma^\vee] \) be the coordinate ring of an affine normal Gorenstein toric variety. Denote \( X = \text{Spec}(R) \). In this case, the canonical divisor \( K_X \) of \( X \) is Cartier, so there exists a \( u_0 \in M \cap \sigma^\vee \) such that \( (u_0, n_i) = 1 \) where the \( n_i \)'s are the primitive generators of \( \sigma \). For any monomial ideal \( \alpha \) of \( R \), denote \( \text{Newt}(\alpha) \) the Newton polyhedron of \( \alpha \) and \( \text{relint}\text{Newt}(\alpha) \) the relative interior of \( \text{Newt}(\alpha) \). The multiplier ideal \( J(\alpha) \) of \( \alpha \) in \( R \) admits a combinatorial description.

Proposition 2.1.

\[
J(\alpha) = \langle x^w \in R \mid w + u_0 \in \text{relint}\text{Newt}(\alpha) \rangle. \tag{2.1}
\]

This is a result by Hara and Yoshida [7, Theorem 4.8] which is generalized by Blickle [1] to arbitrary normal toric varieties.

3. THE EXAMPLE

Consider the 3-dimensional normal semigroup ring \( R = \mathbb{K}[x^2y, xy, xy^2, z], \mathbb{K} \) a field. Notice that \( R \) is a complete intersection, and hence Gorenstein. Note also that

\[
u_0 = (1, 1, 1).
\]

Consider the following two ideals of \( R \):

\[
\alpha = \langle x^2y^4, x^{10}y^6z^2 \rangle,
\]

\[
b = \langle x^{12}y^7, x^{10}y^6z^2 \rangle.
\]

Then \( \alpha b = \langle x^{14}y^{11}, x^{12}y^{10}z^2, x^{22}y^{13}z^2, x^{20}y^{12}z^4 \rangle \). Denote

\[
w_1 = (14, 11, 0),
\]

\[
w_2 = (12, 10, 2),
\]

\[
w_3 = (22, 13, 2),
\]

\[
w_4 = (20, 12, 4).
\]

Observe that the lattice point

\[
u = (18, 12, 2) \in \text{relint}\text{Newt}(\alpha b).
\]
To see this, consider the four points

\[ v_1 = w_1 = (14, 11, 0), \]
\[ v_2 = w_1 + (4, 2, 0) = (18, 13, 0), \]
\[ v_3 = w_1 + (2, 1, 4) = (16, 12, 4), \]
\[ v_4 = \frac{1}{2}(w_3 + w_4) = \left( 21, \frac{25}{2}, 3 \right). \]

They are in \( \text{Newt}(ab) \) and do not lie on a plane, namely, they are affinely independent. Since

\[ v = \frac{5}{16}v_1 + \frac{1}{16}v_2 + \frac{1}{8}v_3 + \frac{1}{2}v_4, \]

it is in \( \text{relint Newt}(ab) \).

Now, since \(-u_0 + v = (17, 11, 1)\), by (2.1)

\[ x^{17}y^{11}z \in \mathcal{J}(ab). \]

We claim that

\[ x^{17}y^{11}z \not\in \mathcal{J}(a)\mathcal{J}(b). \]

An element in \( \mathcal{J}(a)\mathcal{J}(b) \) is a finite sum of monomials of the form \( c \cdot x^a z^b \) where \( c \in k, \alpha, \beta \in M \cap \sigma^\vee \), \( \alpha + u_0 \in \text{relint Newt}(a) \), and \( \beta + u_0 \in \text{relint Newt(b)} \). If \( x^{17}y^{11}z \in \mathcal{J}(a)\mathcal{J}(b) \), then

\[ -u_0 + v = \alpha + \beta \]

for some \( \alpha, \beta \) as above. This means \( v = (18, 12, 2) \) can be written as a sum of a lattice point \( \alpha + u_0 \) in \( \text{relint Newt}(a) \) and a lattice point \( \beta \) in \( -u_0 + \text{relint Newt}(b) \).

We check that this is not possible.

Suppose \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) are lattice points satisfying \( \alpha + u_0 + \beta = v = (18, 12, 2) \). Write \( \alpha' = \alpha + u_0 = (a_1, a_2, a_3) \) and \( \beta = (b_1, b_2, b_3) \), so

\[ (a_1 + b_1, a_2 + b_2, a_3 + b_3) = v = (18, 12, 2). \]

We will show that in each case either \( \alpha' \not\in \text{relint Newt}(b) \) or \( \beta + u_0 \not\in \text{relint Newt}(b) \). First, note that the Newton polyhedron \( \text{Newt}(a) \) is the intersection of halfspaces determined by the following five hyperplanes:

\[ 2x - y = 0, \quad -x + 4y = 14, \quad -x + 2y = 2, \quad -x + 2y + 2z = 6, \quad z = 0. \]

So we have

\[ \text{relint Newt}(a) = \{(x, y, z) \in M \mid 2x - y > 0, -x + 4y > 14, -x + 2y > 2, \]
\[ -x + 2y + 2z > 6, z > 0\} \quad (3.1) \]
Also, Newt(b) is the intersection of the halfspace determined by the following four hyperplanes: \(2x - y = 14, -x + 2y = 2, 4x - 2y + 3z = 34, z = 0\). We have

\[
\text{relint Newt}(\alpha) = \{(x, y, z) \in M \mid 2x - y > 14, -x + 2y > 2, 4x - 2y + 3z > 34, z > 0\}.
\]  

(3.2)

We consider the following cases:

**Case I.** If \(a_1 \geq 7\), then \(b_2 \leq 5\) and \(\beta + u_0 \notin \text{relint Newt}(b)\). To see this, suppose \(\beta + u_0 = (b_1 + 1, b_2 + 1, b_3 + 1) \in \text{relint Newt}(b)\). By (3.2), \(2(b_1 + 1) - (b_2 + 1) > 14\) and \(-(b_1 + 1) + 2(b_2 + 1) > 2\). So \(4(b_2 + 1) - 4 \geq 2(b_1 + 1) > 14 + (b_2 + 1)\) and hence \(b_2 > 5\), which is a contradiction.

**Case II.** If \(a_2 \leq 4\), then \(x' \notin \text{relint Newt}(a)\). Indeed, suppose \(x' = (a_1, a_2, a_3) \in \text{relint Newt}(a)\). By (3.1), \(2a_1 - a_2 > 0\) and \(-a_1 + 4a_2 > 14\). So \(8a_2 - 28 > 2a_1 > a_2\) and hence \(a_2 > 4\).

**Case III.** Suppose \(a_2 = 5\) and \(b_2 = 7\).

a) If \(a_1 \geq 6\), then \(x' \notin \text{relint Newt}(a)\). Indeed, suppose \(x' = (a_1, a_2, a_3) \in \text{relint Newt}(a)\). By (3.1), \(-a_1 + 4a_2 > 14\) and hence \(a_1 < 4a_2 - 14 = 6\).

b) If \(a_1 \leq 5\), then \(b_1 \geq 13\). This implies \(\beta + u_0 \notin \text{relint Newt}(b)\). Indeed, suppose \(\beta + u_0 = (b_1 + 1, b_2 + 1, b_3 + 1) \in \text{relint Newt}(b)\). By (3.2), \(-(b_1 + 1) + 2(b_2 + 1) > 2\) and hence \(b_1 < 2(b_1 + 1) - 3 = 13\).

**Case IV:** Suppose \(a_2 = b_2 = 6\).

a) If \(b_1 \neq 10\), then \(\beta + u_0 \notin \text{relint Newt}(b)\). To see this, suppose \(\beta + u_0 = (b_1 + 1, b_2 + 1, b_3 + 1) \in \text{relint Newt}(b)\). By (3.2), \(2(b_1 + 1) - (b_2 + 1) > 14\) and \(-(b_1 + 1) + 2(b_2 + 1) > 2\). This forces \(b_1 = 10\).

b) If \(b_1 = 10\), then \(x' = (a_1, a_2, a_3) = (8, 6, a_3)\) and \(\beta = (b_1, b_2, b_3) = (10, 6, b_3)\).

i) If \(a_3 \leq 0\), then \(x' \notin \text{relint Newt}(a)\) by (3.1).

ii) If \(a_3 > 2\), then \(b_3 < 0\). In this case, \(\beta + u_0 \notin \text{relint Newt}(b)\) by (3.2).

iii) If \(x' = (a_1, a_2, a_3) = (8, 6, 1)\), then \(-a_1 + 2a_2 + 2a_3 = 6\). So \(x' \notin \text{relint Newt}(a)\) by (3.1).

iv) If \(x' = (a_1, a_2, a_3) = (8, 6, 2)\), then \(\beta = (b_1, b_2, b_3) = (10, 6, 0)\). So \(4(b_1 + 1) - 2(b_2 + 1) + 3(b_3 + 1) = 33 < 34\). Hence \(\beta + u_0 \notin \text{relint Newt}(b)\) by (3.2).

**Remark 3.1.** We briefly explain the idea behind the example. Recall that the integral closure \(\overline{I}\) of a monomial ideal \(I\) in a normal toric ring \(R\) is determined by \(\text{Newt}(I)\) (see, for example, [8]):

\[
\overline{I} = \langle x^w \mid w \in \text{Newt}(I) \rangle.
\]

So Question 1.1 is closely related to the containment \(\overline{I} \cdot \overline{J} \subset \overline{IJ}\) for monomial ideals of \(R\). Huneke and Swanson provide a trick to construct examples where the strict containment \(\overline{I} \cdot \overline{J} \subset \overline{IJ}\) occur (see [6, Example 1.4.9] and the remark after it). We repeat their construction here:
Choose a ring $R'$ and a pair of ideal $I'$, $J'$ in $R'$ such that

$$I' + J' \subset I'' + J''.$$ 

Pick an element

$$r \in I' + J' \setminus (I'' + J'').$$ 

Set $R = R'[Z]$ for some variable $Z$ over $R'$ and set

$$I = I'R + ZR, J = J'R + ZR.$$ 

Then $I$ and $J$ are integrally closed and

$$rZ \in I \setminus J.$$ 

This kind of construction doesn’t always guarantee a counterexample to Question 1.1. However, a suitable choice of $r$, $Z$, $R'$, $I'$, and $J'$ will do. In our example, take

$$R' = \mathbb{K}[x^2y, xy, xy^2],$$

$$r = x^8y^6,$$

$$I' = \langle x^2y^4 \rangle,$$

$$J' = \langle x^{12}y^7 \rangle,$$

$$Z = x^{10}y^6z^2.$$ 

Then $rZ = x^{18}y^{12}z^2$ is exactly the crucial point we considered in the example.

4. TWO-DIMENSIONAL CASE

Let $R = \mathbb{K}[M \cap \sigma']$, $\mathbb{K}$ a field, be a 2-dimensional normal toric ring and denote $X = \text{Spec}(R)$. Then there exists a primitive lattice point $u_0 \in M \cap \sigma'$ such that $(u_0, n_i) = r \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$ where the $n_i$'s are the primitive generators of $\sigma$. So the canonical divisor $K_X$ of $X$ is $\mathbb{Q}$-Cartier and $R$ is $\mathbb{Q}$-Gorenstein.

Set $u_0 = u_0/r$. By Theorem 4.8 in [7], for any monomial ideal $a$ in $R$

$$\mathcal{J}(a) = \langle x^w \in R \mid w + u_0 \in \text{relint Newt}(a) \rangle.$$ (4.1)

The following theorem establishes the subadditivity formula on two-dimensional normal toric rings.

**Theorem 4.1.** For any pair of monomial ideal $a$, $b$ in $R$,

$$\mathcal{J}(ab) \subseteq \mathcal{J}(a)\mathcal{J}(b).$$
Proof. Write \( \alpha = \langle x^a \mid a \in A \rangle \) and \( \beta = \langle x^b \mid b \in B \rangle \) for some finite sets \( A \) and \( B \) in \( M \cap \sigma^\vee \). We assume that \( \{x^a \mid a \in A\} \) and \( \{x^b \mid b \in B\} \) are the sets of monomial minimal generators of \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \), respectively. Then \( \alpha \beta = \langle x^{a+b} \mid a \in A \text{ and } b \in B \rangle \). Let \( x_1, \ldots, x_k \) be the vertices of the Newton polyhedron \( \text{Newt}(\alpha \beta) \) such that

\[
\begin{align*}
z_1 + \rho_1, & \quad \text{conv}\{z_1, z_2\}, \ldots, \text{conv}\{z_{k-1}, z_k\}, & \quad \text{and} & \quad z_k + \rho_2
\end{align*}
\]

form the boundary of \( \text{Newt}(\alpha \beta) \), where \( \rho_1, \rho_2 \) are the two rays of \( \sigma^\vee \). Then

\[
\text{Newt}(\alpha \beta) = \bigcup_{i=1}^{k-1} (\text{conv}\{z_i, z_{i+1}\} + \sigma^\vee).
\]

Note also that the \( z_i \)'s are of the form \( a_i + b_i \) for some \( a_i \in A \) and \( b_i \in B \). Suppose that for some \( i \in \{1, \ldots, k-1\} \), we have \( a_i \neq a_{i+1} \) and \( b_i \neq b_{i+1} \). Then \( a_i + b_{i+1} = a_{i+1} + b_i \), lie on boundary segment \( \text{conv}\{z_i, z_{i+1}\} \), since otherwise they lie on different sides of \( \text{conv}\{z_i, z_{i+1}\} \) which is a contradiction. For any such \( i \), we insert the point \( a_i + b_{i+1} \) to the sequence \( z_1, \ldots, z_k \). So we obtain a sequence, say \( \beta_1 = a'_1 + b'_1, \ldots, \beta_s = a'_s + b'_s \), such that, for each \( i \in \{1, \ldots, s-1\} \), either \( a'_i = a'_{i+1} \) or \( b'_i = b'_{i+1} \), and that

\[
\text{Newt}(\alpha \beta) = \bigcup_{i=1}^{s-1} (\text{conv}\{\beta_i, \beta_{i+1}\} + \sigma^\vee).
\]

Now, observe that

\[
\text{relint } \text{Newt}(\alpha \beta) \subseteq \bigcup_{i=1}^{s-1} (\text{relint } \Delta_i),
\]

where \( \Delta_i = \text{conv}\{\beta_i, \beta_{i+1}\} + \sigma^\vee \). If \( \chi^p \in \mathcal{J}(\alpha \beta) \), then by (4.1) \( p + u_0 \in \text{relint } \text{Newt}(\alpha \beta) \) and hence in \( \text{relint } \Delta_{i_0} \) for some \( i_0 \). Without loss of generality, we may assume \( a'_{i_0} = a'_{i_0+1} \). So

\[
p + u_0 \in \text{relint } \Delta_{i_0} = a'_{i_0} + [\text{relint } (\text{conv}\{b'_0, b'_{i_0+1}\} + \sigma^\vee)] \subseteq a'_{i_0} + \text{relint } \text{Newt}(\beta).
\]

Therefore, \( p \in a'_{i_0} + [−u_0 + \text{relint } \text{Newt}(\beta)] \). Since \( a'_{i_0} + u_0 \in \text{relint } \text{Newt}(\alpha) \), by (4.1) we conclude that \( \chi^p \in \mathcal{J}(\alpha) \mathcal{J}(\beta) \), as desired. \( \Box \)

Remark 4.2. As one can see in the proof of Theorem 4.1, the choice of \( \beta_i \)'s is essential. For any \( \chi^p \in \mathcal{J}(\alpha \beta) \) we are able to choose \( a \in \text{Newt}(\alpha) \) such that \( x^a \) is in the set of monomial minimal generators of \( \alpha \) and that \( p + u_0 \in \text{arelint } \text{Newt}(\beta) \). This cannot be extended to the higher dimensional case. From the example in Section 3, \( x^{17}y^{11}z \in \mathcal{J}(\alpha \beta) \) and \( u_0 = (1, 1, 1) \). \( \text{Newt}(\alpha) \) is minimally generated by \( x^2y^4 \) and \( x^{10}y^6z^2 \). But \( (16, 8, 2) = (18, 12, 2) − (2, 4, 0) \) and \( (8, 6, 0) = (18, 12, 2) − (10, 6, 2) \) are not in \( \text{relint } \text{Newt}(\beta) \) by (3.2). Similarly, \( \text{Newt}(\beta) \) is minimally generated by \( x^1y^7 \) and \( x^{10}y^6z^2 \). But \( (6, 5, 2) = (18, 12, 2) − (12, 7, 0) \) and \( (8, 6, 0) = (18, 12, 2) − (10, 6, 2) \) are not in \( \text{relint } \text{Newt}(\alpha) \) by (3.1).
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