

Prize problem

I will pay **200 €** to the first person who gives the answer (with a proof) to the following question:

Is there a positive integer $n \geq 2$ and words u_1, u_2, \dots, u_n such that both equalities

$$\begin{cases} (u_1 u_2 \cdots u_n)^2 = u_1^2 u_2^2 \cdots u_n^2, \\ (u_1 u_2 \cdots u_n)^3 = u_1^3 u_2^3 \cdots u_n^3, \end{cases}$$

hold and the words u_i , $i = 1, \dots, n$, do not pairwise commute (that is, $u_i u_j \neq u_j u_i$ for at least one pair of indices $i, j \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$)?

Related results

In [Pla03] the negative answer to the question is conjectured.

In [Hol01] it is proved that

$$(u_1 u_2 \cdots u_n)^k = u_1^k u_2^k \cdots u_n^k$$

holds simultaneously for $k = 2, 3, 4$ only for commuting words.

Some other, slightly stronger related results can be found in the paper and in [Hol00].

In [HK97] it is shown that the answer to our question is negative if $n \leq 5$.

On the other hand, there are noncommuting words satisfying

$$(u_1 u_2 \cdots u_n)^k = u_1^k u_2^k \cdots u_n^k$$

for each k (see [Hol01] for an example).

Moreover, in [Hol99] noncommuting words u_1, u_2, \dots, u_7 are given satisfying

$$(u_1^2 u_2^2 \cdots u_7^2)^3 = (u_1^3 u_2^3 \cdots u_7^3)^2.$$

References 1



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