

Distance Constrained Labelings of Trees

Jiří Fiala¹, Petr A. Golovach^{2,*}, and Jan Kratochvíl¹

^{1,**}Institute for Theoretical Computer Science
and Department of Applied Mathematics,
Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
`{fiala,honza}@kam.mff.cuni.cz`
² Institutt for informatikk,
Universitetet i Bergen, Norway
`petr.golovach@ii.uib.no`

Abstract. An $H(p, q)$ -labeling of a graph G is a vertex mapping $f : V_G \rightarrow V_H$ such that the distance between $f(u)$ and $f(v)$ (measured in the graph H) is at least p if the vertices u and v are adjacent in G , and the distance is at least q if u and v are at distance two in G . This notion generalizes the notions of $L(p, q)$ - and $C(p, q)$ -labelings of graphs studied as particular graph models of the Frequency Assignment Problem. We study the computational complexity of the problem of deciding the existence of such a labeling when the graphs G and H come from restricted graph classes. In this way we extend known results for linear and cyclic labelings of trees, with a hope that our results would help to open a new angle of view on the still open problem of $L(p, q)$ -labeling of trees for fixed $p > q > 1$ (i.e., when G is a tree and H is a path).

We present a polynomial time algorithm for $H(p, 1)$ -labeling of trees for arbitrary H . We show that the $H(p, q)$ -labeling problem is NP-complete when the graph G is a star. As the main result we prove NP-completeness for $H(p, q)$ -labeling of trees when H is a symmetric q -caterpillar.

1 Introduction

Motivated by models of wireless communication, the notion of so called distance constrained graph labelings has received a lot of interest in Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science in recent years.

In the simplest case of constraints at distance two, the typical task is, given a graph G and parameters p and q , to assign integer labels to vertices of G such that labels of adjacent vertices differ by at least p , while vertices that share a common neighbor have labels at least q apart. The aim is to minimize the span, i.e., the difference between the smallest and the largest labels used.

The notion of proper graph coloring is a special case of this labeling notion — when $(p, q) = (1, 0)$. Thus it is generally NP-hard to decide whether such

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a labeling exists. On the other hand, in some special cases polynomial-time algorithms exist. For example, when G is a tree and $p \geq q = 1$, the algorithm of Chang and Kuo based on dynamic programming finds a labeling of the minimum span [3,6] in superlinear time $O(n\Delta^5)$, where Δ is the maximum degree of the tree.

Distance constrained labelings can be generalized in several ways. For example, constraints on longer distances can be involved [18,14], or the constraints on the difference of labels between close vertices can be directly implemented by edge weights — the latter case is referred to as the Channel Assignment Problem [22].

Alternatively, the cyclic metric or even more complex metrics on the label set are considered. In particular, if the metric is given as the distance between vertices in some graph H , we get the following mapping:

Definition 1. *Given two positive integers p and q , we say that f is an $H(p, q)$ -labeling of a graph G if f maps the vertices of G onto vertices of H such that the following hold:*

- if u and v are adjacent in G , then $\text{dist}_H(f(u), f(v)) \geq p$,
- if u and v are nonadjacent but share a common neighbor, then $\text{dist}_H(f(u), f(v)) \geq q$.

Observe that if the graph H is a path, the ordinary linear metric is obtained. This has been introduced by Roberts and studied in a number of papers — see, e.g., recent surveys [23,1]. The cyclic metric (corresponding to the case when H is a cycle) was studied in [17,20]. The general approach was suggested in [8] and several (both P-time and NP-hardness) results for various fixed graphs H were presented in [7,10].

Several computational problems can be defined by restricting the graph classes of the input graphs, and/or by fixing some values as parameters of the most general problem which we refer to as follows:

DISTANCE LABELING	DL
<i>Instance:</i> G, H, p and q	
<i>Question:</i> Does G allow an $H(p, q)$ -labeling?	

As it was already mentioned, the linear metric is often considered, i.e. when $H = P_{\lambda+1}$ is a path of length λ . In this case we use the traditional notation “ $L(p, q)$ -labeling of span λ ” for “ $P_{\lambda+1}(p, q)$ -labeling” and also define the problem explicitly:

$L(p, q)$ -DISTANCE LABELING	$L(p, q)$ -DL
<i>Parameters:</i> p, q	
<i>Instance:</i> G and λ	
<i>Question:</i> Does G allow an $L(p, q)$ -labeling of span λ ?	

We focus our attention on various parameterized versions of the DL problem. Griggs and Yeh [15] showed NP-hardness of the $L(2, 1)$ -DL of a general graph,

which means that DL is NP-complete for fixed $(p, q) = (2, 1)$ and H being a path. Later Fiala et al. [9] showed that the $L(2, 1)$ -DL problem remains NP-complete for every fixed $\lambda \geq 4$. Similarly, the labeling problem with the cyclic metric is NP-complete for a fixed span [8], i.e., when $(p, q) = (2, 1)$ and $H = C_\lambda$ for an arbitrary $\lambda \geq 6$.

From the very beginning it was noticed that the distance constrained labeling problem is in certain sense more difficult than ordinary coloring. The first polynomial time algorithm for $L(2, 1)$ -DL for trees came as a little surprise [3]. Attention was then paid to input graphs that are trees and their relatives, either paths and caterpillars as special trees, or graphs of bounded treewidth. Table 1 briefly summarizes the known results on the complexity of the DL problem on these graph classes and the new results presented in this paper. Notice in particular that $L(2, 1)$ -DL belongs to a handful of problems that are solvable in polynomial time on graphs of treewidth one and NP-complete on treewidth two [5].

Table 1. Summary of the complexity of the DL problem

Class of G	Class of H	p	q	Complexity
bounded tw	finite class	on input	on input	P [*]
$tw \leq 2$	paths	2	1	NP-c [5]
$tw \leq 2$	cycles	2	1	NP-c [5]
$pw \leq 2$	all graphs	2	1	NP-c [5]
stars	all graphs	fixed	fixed, ≥ 2	NP-c [*]
trees, \mathcal{L}	paths	fixed	fixed, ≥ 2	NP-c [11]
trees	all graphs	on input	1	P [3,2, *]
trees	cycles	on input $\geq q$	on input ≥ 1	P [20,19]
trees	q -caterpillars	fixed, $\geq 2q + 1$	fixed, ≥ 2	NP-c [*]
trees	paths	fixed	fixed, ≥ 2	Open

The symbol tw means treewidth; pw is pathwidth; \mathcal{L} indicates the list version of the DL problem where every vertex has prescribed set (list) of possible labels; P are problems solvable in polynomial time; NP-c are NP-complete problems; the reference [*] indicates results of this paper.

We start with two observations. For the seventh line, the algorithm of Chang and Kuo [3] can be easily modified to work for arbitrary p and H on the input. It only suffices to modify all tests whether labels of adjacent vertices have difference at least two into tests whether they are mapped onto vertices at distance at least p in H .

The first line of the table is a corollary of a strong theorem of Courcelle [4], who proved that properties expressible in Monadic Second Order Logic (MSOL) can be recognized in polynomial time on any class of graphs of bounded treewidth. If H belongs to a finite graph class, then the graph property "to allow an $H(p, q)$ -labeling" straightforwardly belongs to MSOL. A special case arises, of course, if a single graph H is a fixed parameter of the problem.

In particular, if λ is fixed, then $L(p, q)$ -DL is polynomially solvable for trees. On the other hand, without this assumption on λ the computational complexity of $L(p, q)$ -DL on trees remains open so far. It is regarded as one of the most interesting open problems in the area.

We focus on the following variant when both p and q are fixed:

<p>(p, q)-DISTANCE LABELING <i>Parameters:</i> p and q <i>Instance:</i> G and H <i>Question:</i> Does G allow an $H(p, q)$-labeling?</p>	(p, q) -DL
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Our main contribution is given by Theorems 1 and 2 showing two NP-hardness results for the (p, q) -DL problem: in the case when G is a star (with no restriction on H), and in the case when G is a tree and H is a specific symmetric q -caterpillar. The latter choice of H is motivated by the similarity of a caterpillar with a path, which might provide a useful step in a proof of NP-hardness of the $L(p, q)$ -labeling problem.

2 Preliminaries

Throughout the paper the symbol $[a, b]$ means the interval of integers between a and b (including the bounds), i.e., $[a, b] := \{a, a + 1, \dots, b\}$. We also define $[a] := [1, a]$. The relation $i \equiv_q j$ means that i and j are congruent modulo q , i.e., q divides $i - j$. For $i \equiv_q j$ we define $[i, j]_{\equiv_q} := \{i, i + q, i + 2q, \dots, j - q, j\}$. A set M of integers is t -sparse if the difference between any two elements of M is at least t . We say that a set of integers M is λ -symmetric if for every $x \in M$, it holds that $\lambda - x \in M$.

All graphs are assumed to be finite, undirected, and simple, i.e., without loops or multiple edges. Throughout the paper V_G stands for the set of vertices, and E_G for the set of edges, of a graph G .

We use standard terminology: a *path* P_n is a sequence of n consecutively adjacent vertices (its length being $n - 1$); a *cycle* is a path where the first and the last vertex are adjacent as well; a graph is *connected* if each pair of vertices is joined by a path; the *distance* between two vertices is the length of a shortest path that connects them; a *tree* is a connected graph without a cycle; and a *leaf* is a vertex of degree one. For precise definitions of these terms see, e.g., the textbooks [21,16]. A q -caterpillar is a tree that can be constructed from a path, called the *backbone*, by adding new disjoint paths of length q , called *legs*, and merging one end of each leg with some backbone vertex. We say that a caterpillar is *symmetric*, if it allows an automorphism that reverses the backbone. Obviously, a path can be viewed as a symmetric caterpillar.

As a technical tool for proving NP-hardness results we use the following problem of finding distant representatives:

SYSTEM OF q -DISTANT REPRESENTATIVES

Sq-DR

Parameter: q *Instance:* A collection of sets $M_i, i \in [m]$ of integers.*Question:* Is there a collection of elements $u_i \in M_i, i \in [m]$ that pairwise differ by at least q ?

It is known that the S1-DR problem allows a polynomial time algorithm (by finding a maximum matching in a bipartite graph), while for all $q \geq 2$ the Sq-DR problem is NP-complete, even if each set M has at most three elements [12].

We conclude this section with several observations specific to the $H(p, q)$ -labelings when H is a symmetric caterpillar. If f is such a labeling then the "reversed" mapping f' defined as f composed with the backbone reversing automorphism is a valid $H(p, q)$ -labeling as well. Hence, if we look for a specific graph construction where only a fixed label is allowed on a certain vertex, we can not avoid symmetry of labelings f and f' . For that purpose we need a stronger concept of systems of q -distant representatives.

Lemma 1. *For any $q \geq 2$ and $t \geq q$, the Sq-DR problem remains NP-complete even when restricted to instances whose sets are of size at most 6, t -sparse and λ -symmetric for some λ .*

Proof. We extend the construction from [12] where an instance of the well known NP-complete problem 3-SATISFIABILITY (3-SAT) [13, problem L02] was transformed into an instance of the Sq-DR problem as follows:

Assume that the given Boolean formula is in the conjunctive normal form and consists of m clauses, each of size at most three, over n variables, each with one positive and two negative occurrences.

- The three literals for a variable x_i are represented by a triple $a_i, b_i, a_i + q$ such that $a_i < b_i < a_i + q$. The number b_i represents the positive literal, while $a_i, a_i + q$ the negative ones.
- Triples representing different variables are at least t apart (e.g., the elements a_i form an arithmetic progression of step $q + t$).
- The sets $M'_i, i \in [m]$ represent clauses and are composed from at most three numbers, each uniquely representing one literal of the clause.

The equivalence between the existence of a satisfying assignment and the existence of a set of q -distant representatives is straightforward (for details see [12]).

Without loss of generality assume that there are positive integers α and β such that $M'_i \subset [\alpha, \beta]$ for every $i \in [m]$ (we may assume that these bounds are arbitrarily high, but sufficiently apart).

We set $\lambda := 2\beta + t$ and construct the family of sets $M_i, i \in [m + n]$ as follows:

- for $i \in [m]$: $M_i := \{a, \lambda - a : a \in M'_i\}$,
- for $i \in [n]$: $M_{m+i} := \{b_i, \lambda - b_i\}$.

If we choose the representatives for the sets $M_{m+i}, i \in [n]$ arbitrarily, and exclude infeasible numbers from the remaining sets, then the remaining task is equivalent to the original instance $M'_i, i \in [m]$ of the Sq-DR problem.

3 Distance Labeling of Stars

We first prove NP-hardness of the (p, q) -DL problem when G belongs to a very simple class of graphs, namely to the class of stars.

Theorem 1. *For any $p \geq 0$ and $q \geq 2$, the (p, q) -DL problem is NP-complete even when the graph G is required to be a star.*

Proof. We reduce the INDEPENDENT SET (IS) problem, which for a given graph G and an integer k asks whether G has k pairwise nonadjacent vertices. The IS problem is well known to be NP-complete [13, problem GT20].

Let H_0 and k be an instance of IS. We construct a graph H such that the star $K_{1,k}$ has an $H(p, q)$ -labeling if and only if H_0 has k independent vertices.

The construction of H goes in three steps:

Firstly, if $q = 2$, then we simply let $H_1 := H_0$ and $M := V_{H_0}$. Otherwise, i.e., for $q \geq 2$, we replace each edge of H_0 by a path of length $q - 1$ to obtain H_1 . Now let M be the set of the middle points of the replacement paths (i.e., M is of size $|E_{H_0}|$ when q is odd; otherwise M is twice bigger).

For the second step we first prepare a path of length $\max\{0, \lceil \frac{2p-q-1}{2} \rceil\}$ (observe that this path consists of a single vertex when $2p \leq q + 1$). We make one its ends adjacent to all vertices in the set M . We denote the other end of the path by w .

Finally, if q is odd, we insert new edges to make all vertices in M pairwise adjacent, i.e., the set M now induces a clique. This concludes the construction of the graph H .

The properties of H can be summarized as follows:

- If two vertices were adjacent in H_0 , then they have distance $q - 1$ in H . Analogously, they have distance q if they were non-adjacent.
- Every original vertex is at distance at least p from w , and this bound is attained whenever $2p \geq q - 1$.
- If $p \leq q$ then every newly added vertex except w is at distance less than q from any other vertex of H .
- If $p \geq q$ then every newly added vertex is at distance less than p from w .

Straightforwardly, if H_0 has an independent set S of size k , then we map the center of $K_{1,k}$ onto w and the leaves of $K_{1,k}$ bijectively onto S . This yields a valid $H(p, q)$ -labeling of $K_{1,k}$.

For the opposite implication assume that $K_{1,k}$ has an $H(p, q)$ -labeling f . We distinguish three cases:

- When $p < q$, then the images of the leaves of $K_{1,k}$ are pairwise at distance q in H . Hence, by the properties of H , these are k original vertices that form an independent set in H_0 .
- If $p = q$, then the q -distant vertices of H are some nonadjacent original vertices together with the vertex w . As the image of the center of $K_{1,k}$ belongs into this set as well, H_0 has at least k independent vertices.
- If $p > q$, then w is the image of the center of $K_{1,k}$ (unless $k = 1$, but then the problem is trivial). Analogously as in the previous cases, images of the leaves of $K_{1,k}$ form an independent set of H_0 .

4 Distance Labeling between Two Trees

In this section we show that the DL problem is NP-complete for any $q \geq 2$ and $p \geq 2q + 1$ even when both graphs G and H are required to be trees. Before we state the theorem, we describe the target graph H and explore its properties.

Let p and q be given, such that $q \geq 2$ and $p \geq 2q + 1$. Assume that $l > 2(p - q)$ and for $i \in [l]$ define $m_i := l^3 + il$. For convenience we also let $m_i := m_{2l-i} = l^3 + (2l - i)l$ for $i \in [l + 1, 2l - 1]$.

We construct a graph H_l as follows: We start with a path of length $2l - 2$ on vertices v_1, \dots, v_{2l-1} , called the backbone vertices. For each vertex $v_i, i \in [2l - 1]$, we prepare m_i paths of length q and identify one end of each of these m_i paths with the vertex v_i . By symmetry, every vertex v_{2l-i} has the same number of pending q -paths as the vertex v_i . Observe that the resulting graph depicted in Fig. 1 is a q -caterpillar.

For $i \in [2l - 1]$ and $j \in [m_i]$, let $u_{i,j}$ denote the final vertex of the j -th path hanging from the vertex v_i .

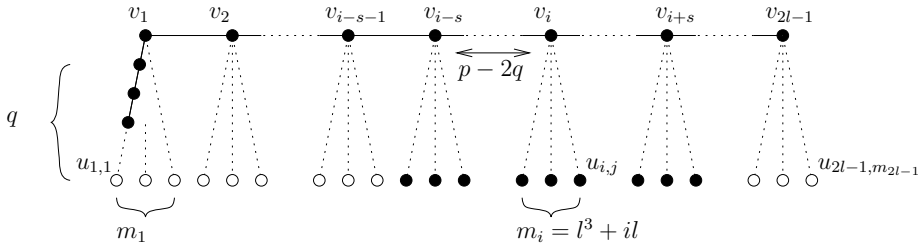


Fig. 1. Construction of the target tree H_l . White vertices define n_i as well as a lower bound on $r(u_{i,j})$.

Observe that the total number of leaves in H_l is $2l^4$.

We define $s := p - 2q$ to shorten some expressions.

For $i \in [2l - 1]$, let n_i be the number of leaves of H_l at distance at least $p - q$ from v_i , i.e.,

$$n_i := \sum_{j \in S_i} m_j = \begin{cases} 2l^4 - (s + i)l^3 - (s + 2i)il + \frac{ls(s+1)}{2} & \text{if } i \in [s - 1], \\ 2l^4 - (2s + 1)l^3 - (2s + 1)il & \text{if } i \in [s, l - s], \text{ and} \\ 2l^4 - (2s + 1)l^3 - (2s + 1)il + (s + i - l)(s + i - l + 1)l & \text{if } i \in [l - s + 1, l], \end{cases}$$

where $S_i := [2l + 1] \setminus [i - s, i + s]$. By symmetry, $n_i := n_{2l-i}$ for $i \in [l + 1, 2l - 1]$. Observe that the sequence n_1, \dots, n_{l-s} is decreasing.

For a vertex $u \in V_{H_l}$, we further define $r(u)$ to be the maximum size of a set of vertices of H_l that are pairwise at least q apart, and that are also at distance at least p from u . In other words, $r(u)$ is an upper bound on the degree of a vertex which is mapped onto u in an $H_l(p, q)$ -labeling.

We claim that for the leaves $u_{i,j}$ with $i \in [l], j \in [m_i]$ the $r(u_{i,j})$ can be bounded by

$$n_i \leq r(u_{i,j}) \leq n_i + \frac{2l-p}{q},$$

since the desired set can be composed from the n_i leaves that are at distance at least $p-q$ from v_i together with suitable backbone vertices. Consequently, $r(u_{i,j}) < n_{i-1}$ for $i \in [2, l-s]$.

Finally, observe that if u is a non-leaf vertex of H , then $r(u) < n_{l-s}$, since with every step away from a leaf the size of the set of p distant vertices decreases by the factor of $\Omega(l^3)$.

By the properties of the values n_i and $r(u)$ we get that:

Lemma 2. *For given p, q and l such that $p \geq 2q + 1$ and $l > 2(p-q) + 1$, let T be a tree of three levels such that for every $i \in [l-s]$ and $j \in [m_i]$, the root y of T has two children $x_{i,j}, x_{2l-i,j}$, both of degree n_i .*

Every $H_l(p, q)$ -labeling f of T satisfies that $f(y) \in \{u_{l,j} \mid j \in [m_l]\}$, and

$$\forall i \in [l-s] : \{f(x_{i,j}), f(x_{2l-i,j}) \mid j \in [m_i]\} = \{u_{i,j}, u_{2l-i,j} \mid j \in [m_i]\}.$$

In addition, T has an $H_l(p, q)$ -labeling such that the leaves of T are mapped onto the leaves of H_l .

Proof. Assume by induction that all vertices $x_{k,j}$ and $x_{2l-k,j}$ with $k < i$ are mapped onto the set $W = \{u_{k,j}, u_{2l-k,j} \mid k < i, j \in [m_k]\}$.

Then vertices $x_{i,j}, x_{2l-i,j}$ with $j \in [m_i]$ must be mapped onto vertices that are at least q apart from W , i.e., on the backbone vertices or inside a path under some $v_{i'}$ with $i' \in [i, 2l-i]$. Among those vertices only leaves $u_{i,j}$ and $u_{2l-i,j}$ satisfy $r(u_{i,j}) = r(u_{2l-i,j}) \geq n_i$ and can be used as images for $x_{i,j}, x_{2l-i,j}$.

When the labels of all $x_{i,j}$ are fixed, the root must be mapped onto a vertex that is at distance at least p from all $u_{i,j}$ with $i \leq l-p+2q$ or $i \geq l+p-2q$. The only such vertices are $u_{l,j}$ with $j \in [m_l]$.

If the first two levels of T are partially labeled as described above, then the children of $x_{i,j}$ can be labeled by vertices $u_{k,j}$ with $|k-i| > s$, only the label of the root y must be avoided. This provides a valid $H_l(p, q)$ -labeling of T .

For $i \in [l-s]$, let T_i denote the tree T rearranged such that its root is one of the children of $x_{i,1}$.

We are ready to prove the main theorem of this section.

Theorem 2. *For any $q \geq 2$ and $p \geq 2q + 1$, the (p, q) -DL problem is NP-complete, even if G is a tree and H is a symmetric q -caterpillar.*

Proof. We reduce the 3-SAT problem and extend the reduction to the Sq-DR problem exposed in Lemma 1.

For a formula with n variables, we set $\alpha := p - q + 1$, $\beta := 2p - 3q$, $t := p$, $l := \alpha + (n-1)p + nq + \beta$, and $\lambda := 2l$. According to these parameters we build the graph H_l and transform the given formula into a collection of t -sparse sets $M_i, i \in [m+n]$.

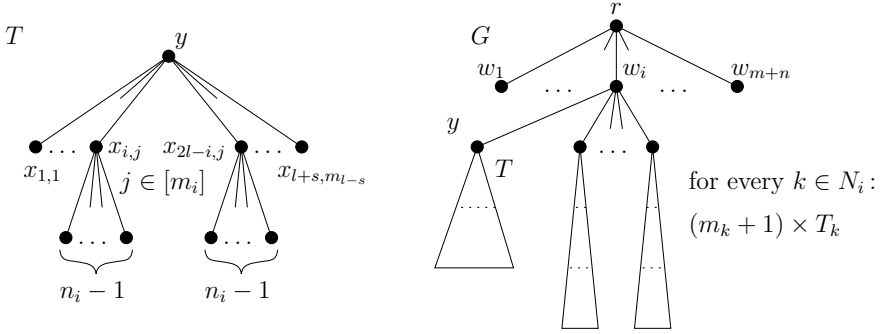


Fig. 2. Construction of trees T and G

We construct the tree G of six levels as follows: the root r has children $w_i, i \in [m+n]$, representing sets M_i .

For each $i \in [m+n]$, let N_i be the set containing all numbers of $[l-s]$ that are at least $p-q$ apart from any number of M_i . Formally, $N_i := [l-s] \setminus \bigcup_{j \in M_i} [j-p+q+1, j+p-q-1]$.

For each $k \in N_i$, we take $m_k + 1$ copies of the tree T_k and add $m_k + 1$ edges between the roots of these trees and the vertex w_i . Finally, we insert a copy of the tree T and insert a new edge so that the root of this T is also a child of w_i .

We repeat the above construction for all $i \in [m+n]$ to obtain the desired graph G . (See Fig. 2.)

We claim that if f is an arbitrary $H_l(p, q)$ -labeling of G then every vertex w_i is mapped on some vertex v_j with $j \in M_i$.

The child of w_i , which is the root y , maps on some $u_{i,j}$. Also the children of y map onto all leaves of form $u_{i,j}, i \in [l-p+q], j \in [m_i]$. Hence, the image of w_i is one of the backbone vertices v_i with $i \in [l-p+q] \cup [l+p-q, 2l-1]$.

On the other hand, for any $k \in N_i$ the image of w_i is at least p apart from some $u_{k,l}$ as well as from some $u_{2l-k,l'}$ with $l, l' \in [m_k]$. This follows from the fact that w_i has in T_k more children than there are the leaves under v_k (or under v_{2l-k}), so both k and $l-k$ appear as the first index of the leaf which is the image of a child of w_i . This proves the claim.

Therefore, the existence of such mapping f yields a valid solution of the original 3-SAT and Sq-DR problems.

In the opposite direction observe that any valid solution of the Sq-DR problem transforms naturally to the mapping on vertices $w_i, i \in [m+n]$. We extend this partial mapping onto the remaining vertices of G such that the root r is mapped onto $u_{1,1}$, all vertices y onto $u_{i,1}$. The copies of trees T are labeled as described in Lemma 2.

For every w_i , we map its children in copies of T_k onto distinct vertices of the set $\{u_{k,j}, u_{2l-k,j} \mid j \in [m_k]\} \setminus \{u_{1,1}, u_{i,1}\}$. Then we extend the labeling onto the entire copy of each T_k like in Lemma 2 without causing any conflicts with other labels. In particular, every child of w_i in T_k is of degree $n_k + 1$ and its children are labeled by leaves of H_l , while its parent (the vertex w_i) by a backbone vertex.

5 Conclusion

In this paper we have studied the computational complexity of the $H(p, q)$ -labeling problem when both the input graph G and the label space graph H are trees. This could hopefully pave the way to the solution of the $L(p, q)$ -labeling of trees (with both p and q fixed), which is the most interesting open problem in the area of computational complexity of distance constrained labeling problems. Another persistent open problem is the complexity of the $L(2, 1)$ -labeling problem for graphs of bounded pathwidth.

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