Discussiones Mathematicae
Graph Theory 39 (2019) 31–40
doi:10.7151/dmgt.2063

BOUNDING THE LOCATING-TOTAL DOMINATION NUMBER OF A TREE IN TERMS OF ITS ANNIHILATION NUMBER

Wenjie Ning

College of Science
China University of Petroleum (East China)
Qingdao 266580, China

e-mail: ningwenjie-0501@163.com

Mei Lu

Department of Mathematical Sciences
Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084, China

e-mail: mlu@math.tsinghua.edu.cn

and

Kun Wang

School of Mathematical Sciences
Anhui University, Hefei 230601, China

e-mail: wangkun26@163.com

Abstract

Suppose $G = (V, E)$ is a graph with no isolated vertex. A subset S of V is called a locating-total dominating set of G if every vertex in V is adjacent to a vertex in S, and for every pair of distinct vertices u and v in $V - S$, we have $N(u) \cap S \neq N(v) \cap S$. The locating-total domination number of G, denoted by $\gamma_t^L(G)$, is the minimum cardinality of a locating-total dominating set of G. The annihilation number of G, denoted by $a(G)$, is the largest integer k such that the sum of the first k terms of the nondecreasing degree sequence of G is at most the number of edges in G. In this paper, we show that for any tree of order $n \geq 2$, $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq a(T) + 1$ and we characterize the trees achieving this bound.

Keywords: total domination, locating-total domination, annihilation number, tree.

2010 Mathematics Subject Classification: 05C69.

1. Introduction

Given a graph $G = (V(G), E(G))$, we usually use n for the number of vertices and m for the number of edges. For a vertex v in G, the set $N_G(v) = \{u \in V(G) \mid uv \in E(G)\}$ (or $N(v)$) is called the *neighborhood* of v. The *degree* of v in G, denoted by $d_G(v)$ or $d(v)$, is equal to $|N(v)|$. A vertex of degree one is a *leaf* and a vertex adjacent to a leaf is a *support vertex*. We will use $l(G)$ to denote the number of leaves of G. For arbitrary two vertices u and v in G, the *distance* between u and v, denoted by $d(u, v)$, is the number of edges in a shortest path joining u and v. If there is no such path, then we define $d(u, v) = \infty$. The *diameter* of G is the maximum distance among all pairs of vertices of G, denoted by $diam(G)$. For a subset $S \subseteq V(G)$, we use $G - S$ to denote the graph obtained from G by deleting the vertices in S and all edges incident with vertices in S. If $S = \{v\}$, we simply write $G - v$ rather than $G - \{v\}$. We define

$$\Sigma(S, G) = \sum_{v \in S} d_G(v).$$

Suppose $G = (V, E)$ is a graph with no isolated vertex. A subset S of V is called a *total dominating set* (TDS) of G if every vertex in V is adjacent to a vertex in S. A total dominating set S is called a *locating-total dominating set* (LTDS) if for every pair of distinct vertices u and v in $V - S$, we have $N(u) \cap S \neq N(v) \cap S$. The *locating-total domination number* of G, denoted by $\gamma_t^L(G)$, is the minimum cardinality of a locating-total dominating set of G. An LTDS of cardinality $\gamma_t^L(G)$ is called a $\gamma_t^L(G)$*-set*. The concept of a locating-total dominating set in a graph was first introduced in [9], since this time many results have been obtained on this parameter (see, for instance, [1–4, 10]).

The annihilation number was first introduced in Pepper's dissertation [13]. Originally it was defined in terms of a reduction process on the degree sequence akin to the Havel-Hakimi process (see, for example, [8, 14]). In [13], Pepper showed the following equivalent way to define the annihilation number. Let $d_1 \leq d_2 \leq \cdots \leq d_n$ be the nondecreasing degree sequence of a graph G having n vertices and m edges. Then the *annihilation number* of G, denoted by $a(G)$, is the largest integer k such that $\sum_{i=1}^{k} d_i \leq m$ or, equivalently, the largest integer k such that

$$\sum_{i=1}^{k} d_i \leq \sum_{i=k+1}^{n} d_i.$$

The relation between annihilation number and some graph parameters have been studied by several authors (see for example [5–7, 11–14]).

For a graph $G = (V(G), E(G))$ with m edges, an *a-set* of G is a subset S of $V(G)$ such that $|S| = a(G)$ and $\Sigma(S, G) \leq m$, where $a(G)$ is the annihilation number of G. An a_{min}-*set* of G is an a-set S of G with $\Sigma(S, G)$ minimum. Thus, if S is an a_{min}-set of G, then S is a set of vertices (not necessarily unique) corresponding to the first $a(G)$ vertices in the nondecreasing degree sequence of G.

In order to prove our theorem, we introduce a variation of the annihilation number of a graph defined in [6]. The *upper annihilation number* of a graph G, denoted by $a^*(G)$, is the largest integer k such that the first k terms of the nondecreasing degree sequence of G is at most $|E(G)| + 1$. That is, if $d_1 \leq d_2 \leq \cdots \leq d_n$ is the nondecreasing degree sequence of a graph G with m edges, then $a^*(G)$ is the largest integer k such that $\sum_{i=1}^{k} d_i \leq m + 1$. Similarly, we define an a^*_{min}-*set* of G to be a set S of vertices in G such that $|S| = a^*(G)$ and S corresponds to the first $a^*(G)$ vertices in the nondecreasing degree sequence of G. By the definitions of the annihilation number and the upper annihilation number, we have $a(G) \leq a^*(G) \leq a(G) + 1$.

A path of order n is P_n. A star of order n is denoted by S_n. A tree is called a *double star* $S(p, q)$, if it is obtained from S_{p+2} and S_{q+1} by identifying a leaf of S_{p+2} with the center of S_{q+1}, where $p, q \geq 1$.

In this paper, we establish an upper bound on the locating-total domination number of a tree in terms of its annihilation number. We show that for any tree of order $n \geq 2$, $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq a(T) + 1$ and we characterize the trees achieving this bound.

2. The Main Result

In order to characterize the trees satisfying $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$, we first introduce a family Γ of labeled trees defined in [4].

For each tree $T \in \Gamma$, every vertex v in T has a label $sta(v) \in \{A, B, C\}$, called its *status*. Let Γ be the family of labeled trees $T = T_k$ that can be obtained as follows. Let T_0 be a path P_6 in which the two leaves have status C, the two support vertices have status A and the remaining two vertices have status B. If $k \geq 1$, then T_k can be obtained from T_{k-1} by one of the following operations.

- **Operation $\boldsymbol{\tau_1}$.** For any $y \in V(T_{k-1})$, if $sta(y) = C$ and $d_{T_{k-1}}(y) = 1$, then add a path $xwvz$ and the edge xy. Let $sta(x) = sta(w) = B$, $sta(v) = A$ and $sta(z) = C$.

- **Operation $\boldsymbol{\tau_2}$.** For any $y \in V(T_{k-1})$, if $sta(y) = B$, then add a path xwv and the edge xy. Let $sta(x) = B$, $sta(w) = A$ and $sta(v) = C$.

Chen and Sohn [4] established the following upper bound of $\gamma_t^L(T)$ of a tree in terms of its order and number of leaves. Moreover, they gave a characterization of the trees achieving this bound.

Theorem 1 [4]**.** *If T is a tree of order $n \geq 3$ with l leaves, then $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq \frac{n+l}{2}$.*

Theorem 2 [4]**.** *If T is a tree of order $n \geq 3$ with l leaves, then $\gamma_t^L(T) = \frac{n+l}{2}$ if and only if $T \in \Gamma$.*

For each tree $T \in \Gamma$, we have the following lemma.

Lemma 3. *Let $T \in \Gamma$. Then*

(1) $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1 = a^*(T)$.

(2) *For any vertex $v \in V(T)$ with $d(v) = 2$, there are an a^*_{min}-set S containing v and an a^*_{min}-set S' not containing v.*

(3) *For every a^*_{min}-set A, it contains no vertices of degree larger than two.*

Proof. Suppose $T \in \Gamma$ is obtained from T_0 by applying k_1 τ_1 operations and k_2 τ_2 operations. Then $n(T) = 6 + 4k_1 + 3k_2$, $l(T) = 2 + k_2$ and by Theorem 2,

$$\gamma_t^L(T) = \frac{n(T) + l(T)}{2} = \frac{(6 + 4k_1 + 3k_2) + (2 + k_2)}{2} = 4 + 2k_1 + 2k_2.$$

Note that $V(T)$ consists of $2 + k_2$ leaves with status C, $4 + 4k_1 + k_2$ vertices of degree two and k_2 vertices with status B and degree larger than two. By simple calculation, we have $a(T) = 3 + 2k_1 + 2k_2$ and $a^*(T) = 4 + 2k_1 + 2k_2$. Thus, (1) holds.

By the definition of an a^*_{min}-set, for any a^*_{min}-set S, S consists of $2 + k_2$ leaves and $2 + 2k_1 + k_2$ vertices of degree two. Note that T has exactly $4 + 4k_1 + k_2$ vertices of degree two and k_2 vertices of degree larger than two. Thus, (2) and (3) hold. ■

Now we present our main result.

Theorem 4. *For a tree T of order $n \geq 2$, the following hold.*

(1) $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq a^*(T)$.

(2) $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq a(T) + 1$.

(3) $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$ *if and only if* $T = P_2$ *or* $T \in \Gamma$.

Proof. We proceed by induction on the order n. If $n = 2$, then $T = P_2$ and $\gamma_t^L(T) = 2 = a^*(T) = a(T) + 1$. If $n = 3$, then $T = P_3 \notin \{P_2\} \cup \Gamma$ and $\gamma_t^L(T) = 2 = a^*(T) = a(T)$. This establishes the base cases. Next we assume that every tree T' of order $3 \leq n' < n$ satisfies properties (1)–(3) in the statement of the theorem. Let T be a tree of order n.

If $diam(T) = 2$, then T is a star. Obviously, $T \notin \{P_2\} \cup \Gamma$ and $\gamma_t^L(T) = n - 1 = a^*(T) = a(T)$. If $diam(T) = 3$, then T is a double star, i.e., $T \cong S_{p,q}$.

Note that $T \notin \{P_2\} \cup \Gamma$, $\gamma_t^L(T) = n-2 = a(T)$, $a^*(T) = n-1$ if $\min\{p,q\} = 1$ and $a^*(T) = n-2$ if $\min\{p,q\} \geq 2$. Hence we may assume $diam(T) \geq 4$.

Let $P = x_0x_1 \cdots x_d$ be a path of length $d = diam(T)$ in T. We root T at x_d.

Claim 1. *We may assume that* $d(x_1) = 2$.

Proof. Suppose $d(x_1) \geq 3$. Then $T \notin \Gamma$. Let $Q = N(x_1) \setminus \{x_2\}$. Then Q is the set of all leaves adjacent to x_1. Let $T' = T - Q \cup \{x_1\}$ and S be an a^*_{min}-set of T'. Then $|E(T)| = |E(T')| + |Q| + 1$ and $\Sigma(S,T') \leq |E(T')| + 1$. Letting $S_1 = S \cup Q$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(S_1,T) &= \Sigma(S \cup Q, T) = \Sigma(S,T) + |Q| \\ &\leq \Sigma(S,T') + 1 + |Q| \\ &\leq |E(T')| + 2 + |Q| = |E(T)| + 1.\end{aligned}$$

Then $a^*(T) \geq a^*(T') + |Q|$. Note that every LTDS of T' can extend to an LTDS of T by combining it with $(Q \setminus \{x_0\}) \cup \{x_1\}$. Thus, $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq \gamma_t^L(T') + |Q|$. By the inductive hypothesis, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\gamma_t^L(T) &\leq \gamma_t^L(T') + |Q| \leq a^*(T') + |Q| \leq a^*(T) \\ &\leq a(T) + 1.\end{aligned}$$

Thus (1) and (2) hold. Next we will show that $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq a(T)$.

Suppose $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$. Then equalities hold throughout the above inequalities, that is, $\gamma_t^L(T) = \gamma_t^L(T') + |Q|$, $\gamma_t^L(T') = a^*(T')$ and $a^*(T) = a^*(T') + |Q| = a(T) + 1$. Let A be an a_{min}-set of T' and $A_1 = A \cup Q$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(A_1,T) &= \Sigma(A \cup Q, T) = \Sigma(A,T) + |Q| \\ &\leq \Sigma(A,T') + 1 + |Q| \\ &\leq |E(T')| + 1 + |Q| = |E(T)|.\end{aligned}$$

Hence $a(T) \geq a(T') + |Q|$. If $\gamma_t^L(T') \leq a(T')$, then $\gamma_t^L(T) = \gamma_t^L(T') + |Q| \leq a(T') + |Q| \leq a(T)$, a contradiction to the assumption of $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$. Thus, $\gamma_t^L(T') = a(T') + 1$. Since $d \geq 4$, we have $n(T') \geq 3$. By the inductive hypothesis, we have $T' \in \Gamma$. Thus, $\gamma_t^L(T') = (n(T') + l(T'))/2$ by Theorem 2.

If $d_{T'}(x_2) \geq 2$, then there is an a^*_{min}-set B not containing x_2 by Lemma 3 (2) and (3). Let $B_1 = B \cup Q$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(B_1,T) &= \Sigma(B \cup Q, T) = \Sigma(B,T) + |Q| \\ &= \Sigma(B,T') + |Q| \\ &\leq |E(T')| + 1 + |Q| = |E(T)|,\end{aligned}$$

and so $a(T) \geq a^*(T') + |Q|$, a contradiction to $a^*(T') + |Q| = a(T) + 1$. Thus, $d_{T'}(x_2) = 1$. Now, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\gamma_t^L(T) &= \gamma_t^L(T') + |Q| = (n(T') + l(T'))/2 + |Q| \\ &= ((n(T) - |Q| - 1) + (l(T) - |Q| + 1))/2 + |Q| \\ &= (n(T) + l(T))/2.\end{aligned}$$

By Theorem 2, $T \in \Gamma$, a contradiction. □

By Claim 1, $d(x_1) = 2$. Let $Y = \{y_1, \ldots, y_l\}$ be the children of x_2, where $y_1 = x_1$. By Claim 1, we may assume $1 \leq d(y_i) \leq 2$ for all $y_i \in Y \setminus \{y_1\}$.

Claim 2. *We may assume that $d_T(y) = 1$ for any $y \in Y \setminus \{y_1\}$.*

Proof. Suppose there is a vertex, say $y_2 \in Y \setminus \{y_1\}$, such that $d_T(y_2) = 2$. Then $T \notin \Gamma$. Let z_2 be the leaf adjacent to y_2. Let $T' = T - \{x_0, x_1\}$ and S be an a^*_{min}-set of T'. Then $|E(T)| = |E(T')| + 2$ and $\Sigma(S, T') \leq |E(T')| + 1$. Since $d \geq 4$, $d_T(x_2) \geq 3$ and $d_{T'}(x_2) \geq 2$.

If $x_2 \in S$, by letting $S_2 = (S \cup \{x_0, x_1\}) \setminus \{x_2\}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(S_2, T) &= \Sigma(S \setminus \{x_2\}, T) + 3 = \Sigma(S \setminus \{x_2\}, T') + 3 \\ &= \Sigma(S, T') - d_{T'}(x_2) + 3 \leq \Sigma(S, T') - 2 + 3 \\ &\leq |E(T')| + 1 + 1 = |E(T)|.\end{aligned}$$

If $x_2 \notin S$, by letting $S_2 = S \cup \{x_0\}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(S_2, T) &= \Sigma(S, T) + 1 = \Sigma(S, T') + 1 \\ &\leq |E(T')| + 1 + 1 = |E(T)|.\end{aligned}$$

In both cases, we have $\Sigma(S_2, T) \leq |E(T)|$ which implies $a(T) \geq a^*(T') + 1$.

Let D be a $\gamma_t^L(T')$-set of T' that contains a minimum number of leaves. Then $\{x_2, y_2\} \subseteq D$, and so $D \cup \{x_1\}$ is an LTDS of T. Thus, $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq \gamma_t^L(T') + 1$. By the inductive hypothesis, we have

$$\gamma_t^L(T) \leq \gamma_t^L(T') + 1 \leq a^*(T') + 1 \leq a(T) \leq a^*(T)$$

and we are done. □

Claim 3. *We may assume that $Y = \{x_1\}$, i.e., $l = 1$.*

Proof. Suppose $l \geq 2$. Then $T \notin \Gamma$ and every vertex in $Y \setminus \{y_1\}$ is a leaf in T by Claim 2.

Let $T' = T - \{x_0\} \cup (Y \setminus \{y_1\})$ and S be an a^*_{min}-set of T'. Then $|E(T)| = |E(T')| + l$ and $\Sigma(S, T') \le |E(T')| + 1$. Since $d_{T'}(x_1) = 1$ and $d_{T'}(x_2) = 2$, we can choose S so that $\{x_1, x_2\} \subseteq S$. Let $S_3 = (S \setminus \{x_2\}) \cup \{x_0\} \cup (Y \setminus \{y_1\})$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(S_3, T) &= \Sigma(S \setminus \{x_2\}, T) + l = \Sigma(S \setminus \{x_2\}, T') + 1 + l \\ &= \Sigma(S, T') - d_{T'}(x_2) + 1 + l = \Sigma(S, T') + l - 1 \\ &\le |E(T')| + l = |E(T)|,\end{aligned}$$

and so $a(T) \ge a^*(T') + l - 1$. Let D be a $\gamma_t^L(T')$-set of T' that contains a minimum number of leaves. Then $x_2 \in D$. Thus, $D \cup (Y \setminus \{y_l\})$ is an LTDS of T and $\gamma_t^L(T) \le \gamma_t^L(T') + l - 1$. By the inductive hypothesis, we have

$$\gamma_t^L(T) \le \gamma_t^L(T') + l - 1 \le a^*(T') + l - 1 \le a(T) \le a^*(T)$$

and we are done. □

By Claim 3, we have $Y = \{x_1\}$. Since $d \ge 4$, $d_T(x_3) \ge 2$. We will finish the proof by considering the following two cases.

Case 1. $d_T(x_3) \ge 3$. Let $T' = T - \{x_0, x_1, x_2\}$ and S be an a^*_{min}-set of T'. Then $|E(T)| = |E(T')| + 3$, $d_{T'}(x_3) \ge 2$ and $\Sigma(S, T') \le |E(T')| + 1$.

If $x_3 \notin S$, by letting $S_4 = S \cup \{x_0, x_1\}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(S_4, T) &= \Sigma(S, T) + 3 = \Sigma(S, T') + 3 \\ &\le |E(T')| + 1 + 3 = |E(T)| + 1.\end{aligned}$$

If $x_3 \in S$, by letting $S_4 = (S \setminus \{x_3\}) \cup \{x_0, x_1, x_2\}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(S_4, T) &= \Sigma(S \setminus \{x_3\}, T') + 5 = \Sigma(S, T') - d_{T'}(x_3) + 5 \\ &\le \Sigma(S, T') - 2 + 5 \le |E(T')| + 1 + 3 \\ &= |E(T)| + 1.\end{aligned}$$

In both cases, we have $\Sigma(S_4, T) \le |E(T)| + 1$ which implies $a^*(T) \ge a^*(T') + 2$. Note that every LTDS of T' can extend to an LTDS of T by combining it with $\{x_1, x_2\}$. Thus, $\gamma_t^L(T) \le \gamma_t^L(T') + 2$. By the inductive hypothesis, we have

$$\gamma_t^L(T) \le \gamma_t^L(T') + 2 \le a^*(T') + 2 \le a^*(T) \le a(T) + 1.$$

It remains to show that T satisfies property (3). By Lemma 3, if $T \in \Gamma$, then $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$, as desired. Suppose now $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$. Then equalities hold throughout the above inequalities, that is, $\gamma_t^L(T) = \gamma_t^L(T') + 2$, $\gamma_t^L(T') =$

$a^*(T')$ and $a^*(T) = a^*(T') + 2 = a(T) + 1$. Since $d_T(x_3) \geq 3$, x_3 is not a leaf of T'. Thus, by Theorem 2, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\gamma_t^L(T) &= \gamma_t^L(T') + 2 = (n(T') + l(T'))/2 + 2 \\ &= (n(T) - 3 + l(T) - 1)/2 + 2 = (n(T) + l(T))/2,\end{aligned}$$

and then $T \in \Gamma$.

Case 2. $d_T(x_3) = 2$. Let $T' = T - \{x_0, x_1, x_2, x_3\}$. Then $|E(T)| = |E(T')| + 4$. If $n(T') = 1$, then $T = P_5 \notin \{P_2\} \cup \Gamma$ and $\gamma_t^L(T) = 3 = a(T) = a^*(T)$. Thus, we may assume that $n(T') \geq 2$. Let S be an a^*_{min}-set of T'. Then $\Sigma(S, T') \leq |E(T')| + 1$.

If $x_4 \notin S$, by letting $S_5 = S \cup \{x_0, x_1\}$, we have $\Sigma(S_5, T) = \Sigma(S, T') + 3 \leq |E(T')| + 4 = |E(T)|$, and so $a(T) \geq a^*(T') + 2$. Note that every LTDS of T' can extend to an LTDS of T by combining it with $\{x_1, x_2\}$. Thus, $\gamma_t^L(T) \leq \gamma_t^L(T') + 2$. By the inductive hypothesis, we have

$$\gamma_t^L(T) \leq \gamma_t^L(T') + 2 \leq a^*(T') + 2 \leq a(T) \leq a^*(T).$$

Suppose now $x_4 \in S$. Let $S_6 = (S \setminus \{x_4\}) \cup \{x_0, x_1, x_2\}$. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma(S_6, T) &= \Sigma(S \setminus \{x_4\}, T') + 5 = \Sigma(S, T') - d_{T'}(x_4) + 5 \\ &\leq \Sigma(S, T') + 4 \leq |E(T')| + 5 \\ &= |E(T)| + 1\end{aligned}$$

which implies that $a^*(T) \geq a^*(T') + 2$. By the inductive hypothesis, we have

$$\gamma_t^L(T) \leq \gamma_t^L(T') + 2 \leq a^*(T') + 2 \leq a^*(T) \leq a(T) + 1.$$

It remains to show that T satisfies property (3). By Lemma 3, if $T \in \Gamma$, then $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$, as desired. Suppose now $\gamma_t^L(T) = a(T) + 1$.

Obviously, we have $\gamma_t^L(T) = \gamma_t^L(T') + 2$, $\gamma_t^L(T') = a^*(T')$ and $a^*(T) = a^*(T') + 2 = a(T) + 1$. If $d_{T'}(x_4) \geq 2$, then we have

$$\Sigma(S_6, T) = \Sigma(S, T') - d_{T'}(x_4) + 5 \leq \Sigma(S, T') + 3 \leq |E(T)|,$$

implying that $a(T) \geq a^*(T') + 2$, a contradiction to $a^*(T) = a^*(T') + 2 = a(T) + 1$. Thus, $d_{T'}(x_4) = 1$. If $T' = P_2$, then $T = P_6 \in \Gamma$. If $n(T') \geq 3$, then

$$\begin{aligned}\gamma_t^L(T) &= \gamma_t^L(T') + 2 = (n(T') + l(T'))/2 + 2 \\ &= (n(T) - 4 + l(T))/2 + 2 = (n(T) + l(T))/2,\end{aligned}$$

and then $T \in \Gamma$ by Theorem 2. ∎

3. Corollaries

Since $\gamma_t(T) \leq \gamma_t^L(T)$ for any tree T of order $n \geq 2$ and $\gamma_t(T_0) = \gamma_t^L(T_0)$ for any tree $T_0 \in \Gamma$ (see [4]), by Theorems 2 and 4, we easily obtain the following corollaries which are stated as main theorems in [5].

Corollary 5 [5]**.** *If T is a nontrivial tree, then $\gamma_t(T) \leq a(T) + 1$, and this bound is sharp.*

Corollary 6 [5]**.** *Let T be a nontrivial tree of order n with n_1 vertices of degree 1. Then, $\gamma_t(T) = a(T) + 1$ if and only if $\gamma_t(T) = (n + n_1)/2$.*

Acknowledgments

Research of the first author is supported by the Shandong Provincial Natural Science Foundation of China (No. ZR2016AB02) and the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities (No. 18CX02142A). Research of the second author is supported by National Natural Science Foundation of China (No. 11771247).

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Received 28 November 2016
Accepted 6 May 2017