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On Reducing a System of Equations to a Single Equation

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Abstract

For a system of polynomial equations over $\mathbb{Q}_p$ we present an efficient construction of a single polynomial of quite small degree whose zero set over $\mathbb{Q}_p$ coincides with the zero set over $\mathbb{Q}_p$ of the original system. We also show that the polynomial has some other attractive features such as low additive and straight-line complexity.

The proof is based on a link established here between the above problem and some recent number theoretic result about zeros of p-adic forms.

1 Introduction

Let us consider a system of n polynomial equations in m variables

$$f_i(x_1, \ldots, x_m) = 0, \qquad i = 1, \ldots, n, \tag{1}$$

over a field $\mathbb{K}$,

$$f_i(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{K}[X_1, \ldots, X_m], \qquad i = 1, \ldots, n.$$

It is shown in [8, Lemma 13] that if $\mathbb{K}$ is not algebraically closed then there exists a polynomial

$$f(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{K}[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$$

such that the system (1) has a solution $x_1, \ldots, x_m \in \mathbb{K}$ if and only if the equation

$$f(x_1, \ldots, x_m) = 0 \tag{2}$$

has a solution $x_1, \ldots, x_m \in \mathbb{K}$. Moreover if the total degree of polynomials $f_1, \ldots, f_n$ does not exceed d, then the total degree of the polynomial f does not exceed $dn^{O(1)}$. Thus we have a polynomial blow-up of the degree. This result has been applied to studying the complexity of some linear algebra problems [8].

Here we show that over $\mathbb{Q}_p$ the same can be achieved with polylogarithmic blow-up of the degree. Moreover, the same is true for the blow-up of the additive and the straight-line complexity of the polynomials $f_1, \ldots, f_n$. In fact, for our construction

$$\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{K}}(f_1, \ldots, f_m) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{K}}(f)$$

where $\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{K}}(f_1, \ldots, f_m)$ and $\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{K}}(f)$ are the zero sets (over $\mathbb{K}$) of the system of equations (1) and the equation (2).

The construction is based on a link established here between the above reduction problem and some recent results on p-adic forms of low degree and exponentially many variables having only trivial p-adic solutions [2, 3, 5, 6, 18].

This type of argument seems to be new in this area and we hope that this technique may be useful for a number of other applications in complexity theory and symbolic computation.

2 Notation and Auxiliary Results

For our applications we adapt a result from [6], although other results from [2, 3, 5, 18] can be used as well.

Lemma 1 *(i) Let p be an odd prime. Given n polynomials*

$$f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1} \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$$

and an integer $t > \log_p n$, we define t polynomials

$$F_j = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} f_i^{(p-1)(2t-j)} \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} f_k^{(p-1)(2t+j)} \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m],$$

where $j = 0, \ldots, t-1$. Then

$$\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1}) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(F_0, \ldots, F_{t-1}).$$

(ii) Let $p = 2$. Given n polynomials

$$f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1} \in \mathbb{Q}_2[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$$

and an integer $t > \log_8 n$, we define t polynomials

$$F_j = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} f_i^{2(4t-j)} \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} f_k^{2(4t+j)} \in \mathbb{Q}_2[X_1, \ldots, X_m],$$

where $j = 0, \ldots, t-1$. Then

$$\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_2}(f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1}) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_2}(F_0, \ldots, F_{t-1}).$$

Proof. Let be be an odd prime. Clearly

$$\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1}) \subseteqq \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(F_0, \ldots, F_{t-1}).$$

It is now enough to show that for $t > \log_p n$ the following system of homogeneous equations

$$\sum_{i=0}^{n-1} x_i^{(p-1)(2t-j)} \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} x_k^{(p-1)(2t+j)} = 0, \qquad j = 0, \ldots, t-1,$$

does not have a nontrivial solution over $\mathbb{Q}_p$. Indeed, let $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ be such a nontrivial solution. We can also assume that all $x_1, \ldots, x_n$ are nonzero p-adic integers, not all divisible by p. We remark that the above system of equations leads to t equations of the form

$$\sum_{i=0}^{n-1} x_i^{(p-1)j_\nu} = 0, \qquad \nu = 1, \ldots, t,$$

with some integers $t < j_1 < \ldots < j_t < 3t$. By *Basic Odd Lemma* of [6, Section 2] we see that this system does not have nonzero modulo p solutions which contradicts our assumption on $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, which finishes the proof in the case $p \geq 3$.

For $p = 2$ the proof is completely analogous except that we use *Basic Even Lemma* of [6, Section 2]. $\square$

We also need a more trivial construction of higher degree:

Lemma 2 *Let p be a prime. Given n polynomials*

$$f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1} \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$$

and an integer $k > \log_p n$, we define a polynomial $F \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$ by

$$F = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} f_i^{(p-1)p^{k-1}}$$

Then $\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1}) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(F)$.

Proof. We observe that if $p \not| \, y$ then $y^{(p-1)p^{k-1}} \equiv 1 \pmod{p^k}$, and if $p \,|\, y$ then $y^{(p-1)p^{k-1}} \equiv 0 \pmod{p^k}$. Hence for the polynomial

$$\Phi(Y_1, \ldots, Y_{p^k-1}) = \sum_{i=1}^{p^k-1} Y_i^{(p-1)p^{k-1}} \in \mathbb{Q}_p[Y_1, \ldots, Y_{p^k-1}]$$

we have

$$\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(\Phi) = \{(0, \ldots, 0)\}$$

and the result follows, when using that $p^k - 1 \geq n$. $\square$

Now we recall several notions from algebraic complexity theory.

For a polynomial $f(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{K}[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$ we define its *additive complexity* $A(f)$ as the least number of signs $+$ and $-$ which are necessary to represent f as an algebraic formula over $\mathbb{K}$ (thus we do not count $\times$ and $/$).

We also define its *straight-line complexity* $L(f)$ as the length of the shortest *straight-line* arithmetic program which computes the values of f at any point $(x_1, \ldots, x_m) \in \mathbb{K}^m$. That is the length L of the shortest chain of the relations $u_i = x_i$, $i = 1, \ldots, m$, and either $u_i = u_{j_i} \circ u_{k_i}$ or $u_i = c_i$ where $c_i \in \mathbb{K}$ is a constant, $i = m + 1, \ldots, L$, with $u_L = f(x_1, \ldots, x_m)$ for all $(x_1, \ldots, x_m) \in \mathbb{K}^m$, where $\circ$ stands for one of the arithmetic operations and $1 \leq j_i, k_i \leq i - 1$.

For example, for the polynomial

$$\begin{aligned} f(x_1, x_2, x_3) &= \left(\left((2x_1 + x_2)^k + 3x_1^{k^2+1} x_3^{k^3}\right)^{2k+1} + 1\right) \\ &\qquad \times \left((x_1 + 3x_2x_3)^k - 2\right) + 1. \end{aligned}$$

we have

$$A(f) = 6, \qquad L(f) = O(\log k).$$

These two notions play a central role in many parts of complexity theory [7, 10, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24]. In particular, polynomials of low additive complexity admit a short encoding but exhibit quite complicated behaviour.

Also, for a polynomial $f(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{K}[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$ we define its *sparsity* $S(f)$ as the number of non-zero coefficients in the representation of f of the form

$$f(X_1, \ldots, X_m) = \sum_{i_1, \ldots, i_m} a_{i_1 \ldots i_m} X_1^{i_1} \ldots X_m^{i_m}.$$

That is $S(f)$ is the number of distinct monomials in such a representation.

Obviously $A(f) \le S(f)$ but as the above example shows $S(f)$ cannot be estimated in terms of $A(f)$.

There is a constantly growing interest to various features of sparse polynomials over various algebraic domains, see [4, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 25, 27, 28, 29] and references therein.

One can easily verify the following statement.

Lemma 3 *For given n polynomials*

$$f_0, \ldots, f_{n-1} \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m],$$

we put

$$F = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} f_i^{D_1} \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} f_k^{D_2},$$

where D_1, D_2 are non-negative integers with $D_1 + D_2 = O(\log n)$. Let

$$\begin{aligned} d &= \max\nolimits_{1 \le i \le n} \deg f_i, \qquad & a &= \max_{1 \le i \le n} A(f_i), \\ l &= \max\nolimits_{1 \le i \le n} L(f_i), \qquad & s &= \max_{1 \le i \le n} S(f_i). \end{aligned}$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} \deg F &= O(d \log n), & A(F) &= O(an), \\ L(F) &= O(ln + n \log\log n), & S(F) &= s^{O(\log n)}, \end{aligned}$$

provided $s \geq 2$.

In connection with the iterated use of Lemma 1 we need the following notation. Let $\log^{(i)} n$ denote i iterations of the function $x \mapsto \lceil \log_3(x+1) \rceil$ taken on n, and let $\log^* n$ denote the minimal i for which $\log^{(i)} n \leq 1$. Finally, we denote

$$\lambda(n) = \prod_{i=1}^{\log^* n} \log^{(i)} n.$$

Throughout this paper p is assumed to be fixed; thus implicit constants in 'O'-symbols may depend on p.

3 Main Results

Theorem 4 *Let polynomials*

$$f_i(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m],$$

where $i = 1, \ldots, n$, *be of total degree at most* d, *of additive complexity at most* a, *of straight-line complexity at most* l *and of sparsity at most* $s \geq 2$.

Then there exists a polynomial

$$G(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$$

- *of total degree* $\deg G = d\lambda(n)2^{O(\log^* n)}$;
- *of additive complexity* $A(G) = an\lambda(n)2^{O(\log^* n)}$;
- *of straight-line complexity* $L(G) = O(ln + n \log n)$;
- *of sparsity* $S(G) = s^{\lambda(n)2^{O(\log^* n)}}$;

and such that $\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f_1, \ldots, f_m) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(G)$.

Proof. Let t be the minimal integer such that $t > \log_3 n$ and use the construction of Lemma 1 to find polynomials $F_1, \ldots, F_t$ such that $\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f_1, \ldots, f_m) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(F_1, \ldots, F_t)$. While $t > 1$ the construction of Lemma 1 is repeated and after a total of $\log^* n$ iterations the result is a single polynomial G such that $\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f_1, \ldots, f_m) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(G)$.

For each application of Lemma 1, the degree of the constructed polynomial grows by a factor $O(\log n)$. When the construction is repeated $\log^* n$ times the constant factor hidden in the O-notation may grow to a factor $2^{O(\log^* n)}$. Bearing this in mind, the stated bounds on the degree and the sparsity follows from Lemma 3.

The bound on the additive complexity similarly follows from repeated applications of Lemma 3.

For the straight line complexity, one must in addition compute the intermediate results only once in order to obtain the stated bound $O(ln + n \log n)$ □

It is an open question, whether our result is nearly optimal. Over the field of real numbers, one may encode an arbitrary number of polynomials into a single polynomial while only doubling the degree when using the form $x_1^2 + x_2^2 + \cdots + x_n^2$. It is known, see [26], that any form in n variables having only trivial zeros over $\mathbb{Q}_p$ must have degree at least $\Omega(\log \log n)$. The construction of Theorem 4 implicitly uses such a form of degree $\lambda(n) 2^{O(\log^* n)}$. An improved result may, however, not be based on such forms, in which case no lower bound is known.

There seems to be a trade-off between additive complexity and degree in the result of Theorem 4 in that a modified construction leads to a better additive complexity with the cost of a slightly higher degree (and sparsity):

Theorem 5 *Under the same assumptions as in Theorem 4 there exists a polynomial*

$$H(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$$

- *of total degree* $\deg H = O(d \log^2 n)$;
- *of additive complexity* $A(H) = O(an \log n)$;
- *of straight-line complexity* $L(H) = O(ln + n \log n)$;
- *of sparsity* $S(H) = s^{O(\log^2 n)}$;

and such that $\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f_1, \ldots, f_m) = \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(H)$.

Proof. Let integer t be the minimal such that $t > \log_3 n$ and use the construction of Lemma 1 to find polynomials $F_1, \ldots, F_t$. Apply the construction of Lemma 2 on these t polynomials (with integer k chosen minimal such that $k > \log_2 t$) to get the single polynomial H with the same zero set as the original n polynomials.

The complexity bounds for H are proved similarly to those for G in theorem 4. □

Finally we show how to reduce studying zero sets of p-adic polynomials of low additive complexity to studying zero sets of sparse polynomials which admit a number of algorithmic approaches [4, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 25, 28, 29].

Theorem 6 *For any polynomial*

$$F(X_1, \ldots, X_m) \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_m]$$

of additive complexity at most $A(F)$ there exists a polynomial

$$f(X_1, \ldots, X_{m+n}) \in \mathbb{Q}_p[X_1, \ldots, X_{m+n}]$$

of sparsity

$$S(f) \leq A(F)^{\lambda(\log n) 2^{O(\log^* n)}}$$

and such that

$$\mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(F) = \pi_m \mathcal{Z}_{\mathbb{Q}_p}(f).$$

where $\pi_m : \mathbb{Q}_p^{m+n} \to \mathbb{Q}_p^m$ is the projection map along the first m coordinates.

Proof. It is easy to show by induction, see also [10, 21, 22], that the equation

$$F(x_1, \ldots, x_m) = 0$$

can be written down as an equivalent system of $n+1 \leq A(F)+1$ equations in $m+n$ variables of the following shape

$$\begin{aligned} x_i &= \alpha_i \prod_{j \in J_i} x_j^{e_{ij}} + \beta_i \prod_{k \in K_i} x_k^{h_{ik}}, \\ & \qquad i = m+1, \ldots, m+n, \\ \prod_{j \in J_{m+n+1}} x_j &= 0, \end{aligned}$$

where $J_i, K_i \subseteq \{1, \ldots, i-1\}$, $\alpha_i, \beta_i \in \mathbb{K}$, with some integer non-negative exponents e_{ij}, h_{ik}. Applying Theorem 4 (with $s = 3$) and using that

$$3^{\lambda(n)} = (n+1)^{\lambda(\log n)} \leq (A(F)+1)^{\lambda(\log n)}$$

we obtain the desired statement. □

We remark that an analogue of Lemma 1 is known for finite algebraic extensions of $\mathbb{Q}_p$ as well [1], thus our results can be transferred to such fields, too.

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