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► **To cite this version:**

Delphine Boucher. An algorithm for decoding skew Reed-Solomon codes with respect to the skew metric. *Designs, Codes and Cryptography*, 2020, Special Issue on Coding and Cryptography 2019, 88 (9), pp.1991-2005. 10.1007/s10623-020-00789-w . hal-01720643

HAL Id: hal-01720643

<https://hal.science/hal-01720643>

Submitted on 1 Mar 2018

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An algorithm for decoding skew Reed-Solomon codes with respect to the skew metric.

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February 27, 2018

Abstract

After giving a new interpretation of the skew metric defined in [4], we show that the decoding algorithm of [2] for skew Reed-Solomon codes remains valid with respect to this metric.

1 Introduction

Skew Reed-Solomon codes are a generalization of Reed-Solomon codes and Gabidulin codes. These codes are MDS codes for the Hamming metric and a decoding algorithm inspired from Welch-Berlekamp algorithm was designed in [2] over finite fields. In [4], the author defines a new metric, called skew-metric, which is optimal for skew Reed-Solomon codes defined over any division ring (Maximum Skew Distance codes, Theorem 1 of [4]).

The aim of this note is to give a new interpretation of the skew metric defined in [4] and prove that the decoding Algorithm 1 page 22 of [2] can be adapted from the Hamming metric to the skew metric.

In Section 2, we recall the material for defining skew Reed-Solomon codes and the skew metric. In Section 3 we give a new interpretation of the skew metric using a least common left multiple of linear skew polynomials. In Section 4, we prove that Algorithm 1 page 22 of [2] can be adapted from the Hamming metric to the skew metric. Examples are given over finite fields.

2 Generalities on skew Reed-Solomon codes

Consider a division ring A , θ an automorphism over A , δ a θ -derivation which is a map $\delta : A \rightarrow A$ such that for all a and b in A :

$$\begin{aligned}\delta(a + b) &= \delta(a) + \delta(b) \\ \delta(ab) &= \delta(a)b + \theta(a)\delta(b),\end{aligned}$$

The ring $R = A[X; \theta, \delta]$ is defined on the set $\{\sum_{i=0}^n a_i X^i | n \in \mathbb{N}, a_i \in A\}$ where the addition is the usual addition of polynomials and the multiplication is defined by the rule : for a in A

$$X \cdot a = \theta(a)X + \delta(a). \tag{1}$$

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The ring R is called a skew polynomial ring or Ore ring (cf. [5]) and its elements are skew polynomials. When θ is not the identity, the ring R is not commutative, it is a left and right Euclidean ring whose left and right ideals are principal. Left and right gcd and lcm exist in R and can be computed using the left and right Euclidean algorithms. In what follows we will assume that least common left multiples of skew polynomials and greatest common right multiples of skew polynomials are necessarily *monic* skew polynomials.

Definition 1. ([3] p. 310) Let A be a division ring, $\theta \in \text{Aut}(A)$ and δ a θ -derivation. For $f \in R$ and $a \in A$, the **(right) remainder evaluation** of f at a is denoted $f(a)$ and is defined as the remainder of the right division of f by $X - a$. If $f(a) = 0$, then a is a **right root** of f .

The following definition ([3] p. 310) generalizes the classical notion of the norm of a field element : for a in A , for $i \in \mathbb{N}$, $N_i^{\theta, \delta}(a)$ is recursively defined as

$$\begin{aligned} N_0^{\theta, \delta}(a) &= 1 \\ N_{i+1}^{\theta, \delta}(a) &= \theta(N_i^{\theta, \delta}(a)) a + \delta(N_i^{\theta, \delta}(a)). \end{aligned}$$

If $f = \sum_i f_i X^i \in R$ and $a \in A$ then $f(a) = \sum_i f_i N_i^{\theta, \delta}(a)$.

Definition 2. ([3], page 321) Let A be a division ring, $\theta \in \text{Aut}(A)$, δ be a θ -derivation and $n \in \mathbb{N}^*$. Let $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ in A . The **(θ, δ) -Vandermonde matrix** of $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ is defined by

$$V_n^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & \cdots & 1 \\ N_1^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha_1) & N_1^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha_2) & \cdots & N_1^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha_n) \\ \vdots & \vdots & \cdots & \vdots \\ N_{n-1}^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha_1) & N_{n-1}^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha_2) & \cdots & N_{n-1}^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha_n) \end{pmatrix}.$$

Later, we will define the skew Reed-Solomon codes by evaluating some skew polynomials at points $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ of A such that $\text{rank}(V_n^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha)) = n$. We will say that these points are P -independent. The following theorem establishes a link between the rank of the Vandermonde matrix mentioned above and the degree of the least common left multiple of linear skew polynomials.

Theorem 1 (Theorem 8, [3] page 326). Let A be a division ring, $n \in \mathbb{N}^*$, $\theta \in \text{Aut}(A)$ and δ be a θ -derivation. Let $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n \in A$ and $g = \text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq n}(X - \alpha_i) \in R$ be the least common left multiple of $X - \alpha_i, i = 1, \dots, n$, then $\deg(g) = \text{rank}(V_n^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n))$. If $\deg(g) = n$ then $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ are **P -independent**.

Consider a subset Ω of A , the **rank** of Ω is $\text{Rank}(\Omega) := \deg \text{lcm}_{u \in \Omega}(X - u)$. Assume that $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ are P -independent. If Ω is a subset of A such that $\text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq n}(X - \alpha_i) = \text{lcm}_{u \in \Omega}(X - u)$, then $(\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ is a **P -basis** of Ω .

Definition 3 (Definition 7 of [2], Definition 19 of [4]). Let A be a division ring, $\theta \in \text{Aut}(A)$ and δ be a θ -derivation. Let $n \in \mathbb{N}^*$, $k \in \{1, \dots, n\}$. Consider $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ on A P -independent in A . The **skew Reed-Solomon code** of length n , dimension k and support $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ is defined as

$$\mathcal{R}_{k, n}^{\theta, \delta}(\alpha) = \{(f(\alpha_1), \dots, f(\alpha_n)) \mid f \in R_{<k}\}.$$

Skew Reed-Solomon codes are MDS codes for the Hamming metric ([2]) and MSD (Maximum Skew Distance) for the skew metric (see Definition 9 and Theorem 1 of [4]). In what follows we recall the definition of the skew metric and give a new interpretation of this metric by using the least common left multiple of linear skew polynomials.

3 Skew metric

Recall that for $y = (y_1, \dots, y_n)$ in A^n , the **Hamming weight** of y is the number of non-zero coordinates of y :

$$w_H(y) := \#\{i \in \{1, \dots, n\} \mid y_i \neq 0\}.$$

Consider a division subring K of A , the **rank weight** of y is the dimension of the space generated by its coordinates over K :

$$w_R(y) := \dim(\langle y_1, \dots, y_n \rangle_K).$$

Reed-Solomon codes are optimal for the Hamming metric (Maximum Separable Distance codes), while Gabidulin codes are optimal for the rank metric (Maximum Rank Distance codes).

Definition 4 (Definition 9 of [4]). *Consider $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ in A^n such that $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ are P -independent. Consider $P = \text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq n}(X - \alpha_i)$ in R . The **skew weight** of $y = (y_1, \dots, y_n) \in A^n$ is*

$$w_\alpha(y) = n - \text{Rank}(Z_\alpha(F))$$

where $F \in R_{<n}$ is the skew interpolation polynomial at the n points (α_i, y_i) and $Z_\alpha(F) = \{u \in A \mid F(u) = P(u) = 0\}$.

Example 1. Consider $\mathbb{F}_{2^6} = \mathbb{F}_2(a)$ where $a^6 + a^4 + a^3 + a + 1 = 0$. Consider $\alpha = (a, a^2, a^3, a^4, a^5, a^6)$. Using Magma, one computes $\text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq 6}(X - a^i) = X^6 - 1$, therefore $a, a^2, a^3, a^4, a^5, a^6$ are P -independent (and α is a P -basis of $\mathbb{F}_{2^6}^*$). Consider $e = (0, 0, 0, 0, a^{56}, a^{55})$, its skew weight is $w_\alpha(e) = 6 - \text{Rank}(Z_\alpha(F))$ where $F = aX^5 + a^{31}X^4 + a^{46}X^3 + a^{22}X^2 + a^{10}X + a^4$ is the skew interpolation polynomial at the points $(a^i, e_i)_{1 \leq i \leq 6}$. The set of roots of F in $\mathbb{F}_{2^6}^*$ is $Z_\alpha(F) = \{a, a^2, a^3, a^4, a^8, a^9, a^{10}, a^{11}, a^{12}, a^{14}, a^{21}, a^{22}, a^{24}, a^{26}, a^{28}, a^{29}, a^{30}, a^{33}, a^{34}, a^{39}, a^{43}, a^{45}, a^{48}, a^{50}, a^{51}, a^{54}, a^{57}, a^{58}, a^{59}, a^{61}, a^{62}\}$ and its rank is $\text{Rank}(Z_\alpha(F)) = \deg \text{lclm}_{u \in Z_\alpha(F)}(X - u) = \deg(X^5 + a^{30}X^4 + a^{45}X^3 + a^{21}X^2 + a^9X + a^3) = 5$. Therefore the skew weight of e is $6 - 5 = 1$. Notice here that the Hamming weight of e is 2 and the rank weight of e is $\dim(\langle a^{56}, a^{55} \rangle_{\mathbb{F}_2}) = 2$.

In what follows, a new interpretation of the skew metric is given (Proposition 1). First two intermediate Lemmas (Lemma 1 and Lemma 2) will be useful.

Lemma 1. *Consider $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ in A^n such that $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ are P -independent. Consider $P = \text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq n}(X - \alpha_i)$ in R and $F \in R_{<n}$ such that $F(\alpha_i) = y_i$ for all i in $\{1, \dots, n\}$. Then*

$$w_\alpha(y) = \deg(P) - \deg(\text{gcd}(P, F)) = \deg(\text{lclm}(P, F)) - \deg(F).$$

Proof. According to Definition 4, $w_\alpha(y) = \deg(P) - \deg(\text{lclm}_{u \in U}(X - u))$ where $U = \{u \in A \mid F(u) = P(u) = 0\}$. Let us prove that $\text{lclm}_{u \in U}(X - u)$ is equal to $\text{gcd}(F, P)$. For all u in U , $X - u$ divides F and P on the right, therefore $\text{lclm}_{u \in U}(X - u)$ divides $\text{gcd}(F, P)$ on the right.

Consider a common right factor H of F and P . According to Theorem 4 of [5], as P is a least common left multiple of irreducible skew polynomials, H is also the least common left multiple of irreducible skew polynomials. Furthermore, all the degrees of these factors are necessarily equal to 1. Consider the set V of A such that $H = \text{lclm}_{v \in V}(X - v)$. Consider v in V ; as H divides P and F on the right, $X - v$ divides P and F on the right, therefore $v \in U$ and H divides $\text{lclm}_{u \in U}(X - u)$. One can conclude that $\text{lclm}_{u \in U}(X - u)$ is equal to $\text{gcd}(F, P)$ and $w_\alpha(y) = \deg(P) - \deg(\text{gcd}(P, F)) = \deg(\text{lclm}(P, F)) - \deg(F)$. \square

Definition 5. ([3]) Let A be a division ring, $\theta \in \text{Aut}(A)$ and δ a θ -derivation. The (θ, δ) -conjugacy class of an element $a \in A$ is the set of all its conjugates

$$a^c := \theta(c)ac^{-1} + \delta(c)c^{-1}$$

where c is taken over A^* .

The following property will be useful next (product formulae) :

Theorem 2 (Product theorem 2.7 of [3]). Let f, g in R and $a \in A$. If $g(a) = 0$, then $(f \cdot g)(a) = 0$. If $g(a) \neq 0$, then $(f \cdot g)(a) = f(a^{g(a)})g(a)$.

Lemma 2. Consider $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ in A , P -independent, consider $F \in R \setminus \{0\}$ and $P = \text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq N}(X - \alpha_i) \in R$. Consider the monic skew polynomial $E = \text{lclm}_{F(\alpha_i) \neq 0}(X - \alpha_i^{F(\alpha_i)})$, then $E \cdot F = \lambda \cdot \text{lclm}(P, F)$ where λ is a non zero constant.

Proof. Consider \tilde{E} such that $\tilde{E} \cdot F = \text{lclm}(P, F)$. Let us first prove that \tilde{E} divides E on the right. This amounts to show that $\tilde{E} \cdot F$ divides $E \cdot F$ on the right. As F divides $E \cdot F$ on the right and $\tilde{E} \cdot F = \text{lclm}(P, F)$, it remains to prove that P divides $E \cdot F$ on the right. Consider i in $\{1, \dots, N\}$. If $F(\alpha_i) \neq 0$, then according to the definition of E , $E(\alpha_i^{F(\alpha_i)}) = 0$. According to product formulae (Theorem 2), $(E \cdot F)(\alpha_i) = E(\alpha_i^{F(\alpha_i)}) \times F(\alpha_i)$, therefore one has

$$(E \cdot F)(\alpha_i) = 0. \quad (2)$$

If $F(\alpha_i) = 0$ then the previous equality (2) still holds (according to Theorem 2). One concludes that P divides $E \cdot F$ on the right. Therefore $\text{lclm}(P, F) = \tilde{E} \cdot F$ divides $E \cdot F$ on the right and \tilde{E} divides E on the right. To prove that E divides \tilde{E} on the right, it suffices to prove that \tilde{E} cancels at $\alpha_i^{F(\alpha_i)}$ for all i in $\{1, \dots, N\}$ such that $F(\alpha_i) \neq 0$. Consider i in $\{1, \dots, N\}$ such that $F(\alpha_i) \neq 0$. As P divides $\tilde{E} \cdot F$ on the right, its right roots are also right roots of $\tilde{E} \cdot F$, therefore $\tilde{E} \cdot F$ cancels at α_i . Furthermore $F(\alpha_i) \neq 0$, therefore, according to the product formulae, $\tilde{E}(\alpha_i^{F(\alpha_i)}) = 0$.

To conclude, there exists λ in $A \setminus \{0\}$ such that $E = \lambda \tilde{E}$. \square

From Lemma 1 and Lemma 2, one deduces a new interpretation of the skew weight. :

Proposition 1. Consider $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ in A^n such that $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ are P -independent. Consider $y = (y_1, \dots, y_n)$ in A^n . The skew weight of y satisfies :

$$w_\alpha(y) = \deg \text{lclm}_{y_i \neq 0}(X - \alpha_i^{y_i}). \quad (3)$$

Proof. Consider $P = \text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq n}(X - \alpha_i)$ and F the interpolation skew polynomial with degree $< n$ such that $F(\alpha_i) = y_i$ for all i in $\{1, \dots, n\}$. According to Lemma 1, $w_\alpha(y) = \deg(\text{lclm}(P, F)) - \deg(F)$. According to Lemma 2, $\text{lclm}(P, F) = E \cdot F$ where $E = \text{lclm}_{y_i \neq 0}(X - \alpha_i^{y_i})$, therefore $w_\alpha(y) = \deg(E)$. \square

Remark 1. Consider the notations of Proposition 1. If $\theta = \text{id}$ and $\delta = 0$ then $\text{lclm}_{y_i \neq 0}(X - \alpha_i^{y_i}) = \text{ppcm}_{y_i \neq 0}(X - \alpha_i) = \prod_{y_i \neq 0}(X - \alpha_i)$ therefore the skew weight of y is equal to its Hamming weight : $w_\alpha(y) = w_H(y)$.

Remark 2. Consider the notations of Proposition 1. If all the α_i are conjugate, consider $\xi \in A$, $a_i \in A^*$ such that $\alpha_i = \xi^{a_i}$, then if $y_i \neq 0$, $\alpha_i^{y_i} = \xi^{a_i y_i}$ and the skew weight of y is the rank of the Vandermonde matrix of $(\xi^{a_i y_i})$. According to Theorem 4.5 of [3], this is the rank weight of $(a_i y_i)$: $w_\alpha(e) = w_R((a_i y_i)_{y_i \neq 0}) = w_R((a_i y_i)_{1 \leq i \leq n})$.

Example 2. (see Example 1) Consider $\mathbb{F}_{2^6} = \mathbb{F}_2(a)$ where $a^6 + a^4 + a^3 + a + 1 = 0$. Consider $\alpha = (a, a^2, a^3, a^4, a^5, a^6)$ and $e = (0, 0, 0, 0, a^{56}, a^{55})$. The skew weight of e is equal to the degree of the lclm of $X - a^{56} \times a^5 = X - a^{61}$ and $X - a^{55} \times a^6 = X - a^{61}$, therefore it is equal to 1.

Here is a proof of Theorem 1 [4] using formulation (3).

Theorem 3 (Theorem 1 of [4]). The code is MDS for the skew metric (Maximum Skew Distance).

Proof. Consider a codeword $c = (f(\alpha_1), \dots, f(\alpha_n))$ of skew weight $w < n - k + 1$ where $f \in R_{<k}$. Consider $E(X) = \text{lclm}_{c_i \neq 0}(X - \alpha_i^{c_i})$, then according to Product Theorem 2, for all i in $\{1, \dots, n\}$, $(E \cdot f)(\alpha_i) = 0$. Furthermore, according to (3), the degree of the skew polynomial E is equal to the skew weight of c , therefore the degree of $E \cdot f$ is less than or equal to $(n - k) + (k - 1) = n - 1$. As $E \cdot f$ cancels at n P -independent points, it cancels. As E is nonzero, $f = 0$ and $c = 0$. \square

4 Decoding algorithm

We prove here that the decoding algorithm 1 page 22 of [2] with respect to the Hamming distance still works with respect to the skew metric. We first need a small technical lemma.

Lemma 3. Consider $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ in A^n such that $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ are P -independent. Consider g and Q in R then $w_\alpha((Q \cdot g)(\alpha_i)) \leq w_\alpha(g(\alpha_i))$.

Proof. Consider $P = \text{lclm}_{1 \leq i \leq n}(X - \alpha_i)$. According to Lemma 1, $w_\alpha(g(\alpha_i)) = \deg(P) - \deg(\text{gcd}(g, P))$ and $w_\alpha((Q \cdot g)(\alpha_i)) = \deg(P) - \deg(\text{gcd}(Q \cdot g, P))$, therefore, $w_\alpha((Q \cdot g)(\alpha_i)) = w_\alpha(g(\alpha_i)) + \deg(\text{gcd}(g, P)) - \deg(\text{gcd}(Q \cdot g, P)) \leq w_\alpha(g(\alpha_i))$. \square

Algorithm 1 Skew weight Decoding algorithm of skew Reed-Solomon code

Require: $r \in A^n$ such that $r = c + e$ with $w_\alpha(e) \leq t := \lfloor (n - k)/2 \rfloor$, $c = (f(\alpha_1), \dots, f(\alpha_n))$ and $f \in R_{<k}$

Ensure: f

- 1: Computation of Q_0 and Q_1 in R such that $\deg(Q_0) \leq d_0 := n - 1 - t$, $\deg(Q_1) \leq d_1 := d_0 - (k - 1)$ and $(Q_0 + Q_1 \cdot r_i)(\alpha_i) = 0$ for all i in $\{1, \dots, n\}$
Solve the linear system with unknowns q_0, \dots, q_n :

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{if } r_i = 0 : \sum_{j=0}^{d_0} q_j N_j^\theta(\alpha_i) = 0 \\ \text{if } r_i \neq 0 : \sum_{j=0}^{d_0} q_j N_j^\theta(\alpha_i) + \sum_{j=0}^{d_1} q_{d_0+j+1} N_j^\theta(\alpha_i^{r_i}) r_i = 0 \end{array} \right.$$

$$Q_0(X) \leftarrow \sum_{j=0}^{d_0} q_j X^j$$

$$Q_1(X) \leftarrow \sum_{j=0}^{d_1} q_{j+1+d_0} X^j$$

- 2: Computation of the quotient f in the left division of $Q_0(X)$ by $-Q_1(X)$ in R
 - 3: **return** f
-

Proposition 2. *Decoding algorithm 1 is correct.*

Proof. Consider $Z(X) = Q_0(X) + Q_1(X) \cdot f(X) \in R$ and $E(X) = \text{lcm}_{Z(\alpha_i) \neq 0} (X - \alpha_i^{Z(\alpha_i)})$. According to Product Theorem 2, the skew polynomial $E \cdot Z$ cancels at α_i for all i in $\{1, \dots, n\}$. Furthermore, as $(Q_0 + Q_1 \cdot r_i)(\alpha_i) = 0$ for all i in $\{1, \dots, n\}$, $Z(\alpha_i) = (Q_1 \cdot f)(\alpha_i) - (Q_1 \cdot r_i)(\alpha_i) = (Q_1 \cdot (f - r_i))(\alpha_i)$. According to Lemma 3, as $w_\alpha((f - r_i)(\alpha_i)) \leq t$, one has $w_\alpha((Q_1 \cdot (f - r_i))(\alpha_i)) \leq t$. According to (3), the degree of E is equal to $w_\alpha(Z(\alpha_i))$, therefore, it is less than or equal to t . As the degree of Z is less than or equal to $n - t - 1$, the degree of $E \cdot Z$ is $\leq n - t - 1 + t < n$. The skew polynomial $E \cdot Z$ cancels at n P -independent points, therefore it is equal to 0. To conclude, the skew polynomial Z is equal to 0 and f is the left division of $-Q_0$ by Q_1 . \square

Example 3. Consider $\mathbb{F}_{2^6} = \mathbb{F}_2(a)$ where $a^6 + a^4 + a^3 + a + 1 = 0$. Consider the skew Reed-Solomon code with support $\alpha = (a, a^2, a^3, a^4, a^5, a^6)$ and dimension 3. Consider $f = a$ and $e = (0, 0, 0, 0, a^{56}, a^{55})$. The skew weight of e is equal to 1 (see Example 1). Consider $r = (a, a, a, a, a, a) + e = (a, a, a, a, 1, a^{19})$. Then the unknown skew polynomials Q_0 and Q_1 have degrees at most 4 and 2 and a non zero solution to the linear system satisfied by their coefficients is $(1, 0, a^9, 0, 0, a^{62}, 0, a^5)$. Therefore $Q_0 = 1 + a^9 X^2 = (a^{62} + a^5 X^2) \cdot a$, $Q_1 = a^{62} + a^5 X^2$ and the quotient in the left division of Q_0 by $-Q_1$ is equal to a .

5 Conclusion

In this note, a new interpretation of the skew metric defined in [4] is given and the decoding algorithm of [2] is adapted to the skew metric for skew Reed-

Solomon codes. It could be interesting to see how to manage erasure errors for this family of codes and this metric and how to improve the decoding algorithm to get quadratic complexity as it was done recently in [1] for generalized Gabidulin codes.

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