Crooked Maps in Finite Fields

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EuroComb 2005 DMTCS proc. **AE**, 2005, 167–170

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We consider the maps $f : \mathbb{F}_{2^n} \to \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ with the property that the set $\{f(x+a)+f(x) : x \in F_{2^n}\}$ is a hyperplane or a complement of hyperplane for every $a \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*$. The main goal of the talk is to show that almost all maps $f(x) = \sum_{b \in B} c_b(x+b)^d$, where $B \subset \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ and $\sum_{b \in B} c_b \neq 0$, are not of that type. In particular, the only such power maps have exponents $2^i + 2^j$ with $\gcd(n, i-j) = 1$. We give also a geometrical characterization of this maps.

Keywords: almost perfect maps, Gold power function, quadrics

1 Introduction

For applications in cryptography the maps $f : \mathbb{F}_{2^n} \to \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$, which are far from being linear, are important. There are several possibilities to define "being far from linear". Let $L : \mathbb{F}_{2^n} \to \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ be a linear map, then the set $\{L(x+a)+L(x) : x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}\}$ consists of only one element $L(a)$ for all fixed $a \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$. Hence, a function $f : \mathbb{F}_{2^n} \to \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ would be far from being linear if the sets $\{f(x+a)+f(x) : x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}\}$ are as big as possible. We can also think about $\{L(x+a)+L(x) : x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}\}$ as an affine subspace with only one element, and require for $\{f(x+a)+f(x) : x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}\}$ to be one of the largest possible affine subspaces. Another possibility is to require that all coordinate functions $\text{tr}(\alpha f(x)) : \mathbb{F}_{2^n} \to \mathbb{F}_2$ have large Hamming distance from the linear functions $\text{tr}(\beta x)$ (which are the only linear functions from $\mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ into $\mathbb{F}_2$). There are three classes of maps with good nonlinearity properties ([4], [1]):

Definition 1 *A map $f : F_{2^n} \to F_{2^n}$ is called*
almost perfect nonlinear, *if for every $a \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*$*

$$|\{f(x+a)+f(x) : x \in F_{2^n}\}| = 2^{n-1};$$

crooked, *if for every $a \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*$*

$$\{f(x+a)+f(x) : x \in F_{2^n}\}$$

is a hyperplane or a complement of a hyperplane;
almost bent, *if n is odd and for all $\alpha \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*, \beta \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$*

$$\mathcal{F}_f(\alpha, \beta) := \sum_{x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}} (-1)^{tr(\alpha f(x)+\beta x)} \in \{-2^{\frac{n+1}{2}}, 0, 2^{\frac{n+1}{2}}\}.$$

Observe, that we extend the notion of crooked maps introduced in [1]. In [1] a map is called crooked if all sets $\{f(x+a)+f(x) : x \in F_{2^n}\}$ are complements of hyperplanes. These are in our notion bijective crooked maps. Bijective crooked maps exist only for n odd, while crooked maps exist also for n even ([15], [13]). It can be shown ([4], [15], [13]), that

$$\text{crooked} \Rightarrow \text{almost bent} \Rightarrow \text{almost perfect nonlinear.}$$

All known almost perfect nonlinear functions can be obtained from almost perfect nonlinear power maps using the following construction.

Proposition 1 ([3]) *Let $f : \mathbb{F}_{2^n} \to \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ be an almost perfect nonlinear map and $l_1, l_2 : \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^2 \to \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ be linear maps. Assume that (l_1, l_2) is a permutation on $\mathbb{F}_{2^n}^2$ and $f_2 = l_2(f(x), x)$ is a permutation on $\mathbb{F}_{2^n}$. Then, the map $f_1 \circ f_2^{-1}$, where $f_1(x) = l_1(f(x), x)$, is almost perfect nonlinear.*

The known exponents of power almost nonlinear maps (up to factor 2^i) are

$2^k + 1,\ \gcd(k, n) = 1$ (Gold's exponent [9],[1]);
$2^{2k} - 2^k + 1$, $\gcd(k, n) = 1$ (Kasami's exponent [12])
$2^{4k} + 2^{3k} + 2^{2k} + 2^k - 1$, if $n = 5k$ (Dobbertin's function [7])
if $n = 2m + 1$ also $2^m + 3$ (Welch's exponent [6], [2], [11])
$2^m + 2^{\frac{m}{2}} - 1$, if m is even, and
$2^m + 2^{\frac{3m+1}{2}} - 1$, if m is odd (Niho's exponent [5], [11]);
$2^n - 2$ (field inverse [14]).

This list is conjectured to be complete.

The main goal of our talk is to show that the only crooked power maps are the ones with Gold exponents. Denote by C_k the cyclotomic coset modulo $2^n - 1$ containing k, more precisely,

$$C_k = \{k, 2k, \ldots, 2^{n-1}k\} \pmod{2^n - 1}.$$

If $|C_k| = l$, then $\{x^k : x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}\} \subset \mathbb{F}_{2^l}$ and l is the smallest such number. The binary weight of k is the number of ones in its binary representation. For two integers i and j we write $i \prec j$ if $i \neq j$ and in the binary representations of these integers every digit of i is less or equal to the corresponding digit of j.

We call the integers in the cyclotomic class of $\sum_{j=0}^{\frac{n}{g}-2} 2^{jg}$ exceptional, where g is a divisor of n.

The following results imply that the only crooked power maps are the Gold power maps.

Lemma 1 *Let an integer $0 \le d \le 2^n - 2$ have binary weight > 2 and $|C_d| = n$. If for every i with $2^i \prec d$ there exist $j(i)$ and $0 < s(i) < n$ such that $2^{j(i)} \prec d$ and $(d - 2^i) \equiv 2^{s(i)}(d - 2^{j(i)}) \pmod{2^n - 1}$, then d is exceptional.*

Corollary 1 *Let $1 \le d \le 2^n - 2$ be an unexceptional integer of binary weight > 2, $|C_d| = n$. If $f : \mathbb{F}_{2^n} \to \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ is given by $f(x) = \sum_{b \in B} c_b (x+b)^d$, where $B \subset \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ and $\sum_{b \in B} c_b \neq 0$, then the set $\{f(x) + f(x+a) : x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}\}$ contains n linearly independent vectors for every $a \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*$.*

Theorem 1 *If $1 \le d \le 2^n - 2$ is an unexceptional integer of binary weight > 2 and $|C_d| = n$, then $f(x) = \sum_{b \in B} c_b (x+b)^d$, where $B \subset \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ and $\sum_{b \in B} c_b \neq 0$, is not crooked.*

In the case $B = \{0\}$ the exceptional exponents can be excluded as well.

Theorem 2 *The only crooked power maps in $\mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ are the ones with exponent $2^i + 2^j$, gcd($i - j, n$)=1.*

It is conjectured [13], that all crooked maps contain only monomials with exponents of binary weight 2 in their polynomial representation. The following observation strengthens this conjecture.

Let n be odd. The almost bent permutations $f(x)$ can be characterized as maps with coordinate functions tr($\alpha f(x)$) having the same distances from the hyperplanes as nondegenerate quadrics ([8]). More precisely, let $\alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*$

$$F_\alpha := \{x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n} : tr(\alpha f(x)) = 1\} \text{ and } H_i(\beta) := \{x \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n} : tr(\beta x) = i\},\ i = 0, 1.$$

Then a permutation $f(x)$ is almost bent if and only if

$$F_\alpha \cap H_i(\beta) \in \{2^{n-2}, 2^{n-2} \pm 2^{\frac{n-3}{2}}\},\ i = 0, 1,$$

for all $\alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*$. The following Theorem shows that the coordinate functions of crooked maps behave like quadrics also with the affine subspaces of dimension $n - 2$.

Theorem 3 *Let f be an almost bent permutation with $f(0) = 0$. Then f is crooked if and only if*

$$F_\alpha \cap H_i(\beta_1) \cap H_j(\beta_2) \in \{2^{n-3}, 2^{n-3} \pm 2^{\frac{n-3}{2}}\},\ i, j \in \{0, 1\},$$

where $\alpha, \beta_1 \neq \beta_2 \in \mathbb{F}_{2^n}^*$.

Last Theorem was proved using the arguments of the proof for a similar result about power maps in [10].

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