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# Geometric and algebraic structures related to highly nonlinear functions

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This article is obtained by editing the slides of my talk given at the conference.

## 1 Summary

Throughout this talk,

$F$  is a finite field of  $p^n$  elements with  $p$  a prime number,  
 $V$  is the vector space underlying  $F$  (so  $V$  is of dimension  $n$  over  $\mathbb{F}_p$ ).

We consider two classes of functions on  $V$ , called **planar**(or **nonlinear (NL)**) and **almost perfectly nonlinear (APN)**, defined only when  $p = 2$ .

With each of these functions, an algebraic structure and some geometric structures are associated. For a planar function, the associated geometric structure is an affine plane with some transitivity. The associated algebraic structure is commutative **presemifield** iff the function is **Dembowski-Ostrom(DO)**.

For an APN function, the associated geometric structure is a semiplane. The associative algebraic structure is distributive iff the function is **quadratic**. For a quadratic APN function, we may associate another geometric structure, a certain dimensional dual hyperoval over  $\mathbb{F}_2$  with second smallest ambient space.

Algebraic structures associated with planar (resp. APN) functions are realized as the epimorphic images of a vector space  $W := (V \otimes V)/A(V)$  (resp.  $(V \otimes V)/S(V) \cong A(V)$ ). The corresponding kernel  $K$  is a subspace of  $W$  of codimension  $n$  in  $W$  and contains no vectors corresponding to lines (1-dimensional subspaces) of  $V$ .

Exhausting DO PN (resp. quadratic APN) functions up to EA-equivalence is essentially equivalent to finding all such subspaces  $K$  up to the diagonal action of  $GL(V)$ .

I discuss explicit descriptions of  $(V \otimes V)/S(V) \cong A(V)$  which seems efficient to examine such subspaces. My final aim is to establish the following statement:

**Conjecture 1** *The number of such subspaces grows exponentially as  $n$  is getting larger.*

## 2 Highly Nonlinear Functions

### 2.1 Planar(or PN) and APN functions

For a function  $f$  on  $V$  and  $0 \neq a \in V$ , consider the map  $\delta(f)_a$  on  $V$  defined by  $\delta(f)_a(x) := f(x+a) - f(x)$ .

If  $f$  is linear, then  $\delta(f)_a$  takes a single value  $f(a)$ , namely,  $|\delta(f)_a(V)| = 1$  for every  $0 \neq a \in V$ . So the opposite property to the linearity is that  $|\delta(f)_a(V)|$  is large as possible for every  $0 \neq a \in V$ . Observe that  $|\delta(f)_a(V)| \leq |V|$  if  $p$  is odd, and  $|\delta(f)_a(V)| \leq |V|/2$  if  $p = 2$ , because  $\delta(f)_a(x+a) = \delta(f)_a(x+a)$  ( $x \in V$ ) in this case.

**Definition 1** *With the previous notation,*

- *$f$  is called **planar** (or **perfect nonlinear (PN)**) if  $|\delta(f)_a(V)| = |V|$ .  
Equivalently,  $\delta(f)_a$  is bijective for every  $0 \neq a \in V$ .*
- *$f$  is called **almost perfect nonlinear (APN)** if  $|\delta(f)_a(V)| = |V|/2$ .  
Equivalently,  $\delta(f)_a$  is a two to one map for every  $0 \neq a \in V$ .*

It can be shown that if there exists a PN function on  $V$  then  $p$  is odd.

## 2.2 Examples of APN functions

The following maps are APN on  $F \cong \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$  for every  $n$ .

$$g(x) = x^{2^e+1} \text{ with g.c.d.}(e, n) = 1,$$

$$f(x) = x^3 + \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} x^{2^i}.$$

The second one was found around 2007. Including this family, several infinite series of APN functions are constructed recently (see e.g. [1, Table 2]). The following is the first example of a quadratic APN map which is not graph-equivalent to any monomial map.

**Example 1** [4] *On  $F \cong \mathbb{F}_{2^{10}}$ ,  $f(x) = x^3 + ux^{36}$  ( $u \in F$ ) is APN iff  $u \in \omega K^\times \cup \omega^2 K^\times$ , where  $K = \mathbb{F}_{2^5}$  and  $\omega^3 = 1 \neq \omega \in K$ .*

## 2.3 Graph and Extended affine equivalences

Let  $f$  and  $g$  be functions on  $V$ .

**Definition 2** *We say that  $f$  is **graph-equivalent** (or **CCZ-equivalent**) to  $g$  if there are  $\mathbb{F}_p$ -linear maps  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma$  and  $\delta$  on  $V$  and  $c, d \in V$  s.t.  $(x, y) \mapsto (x^\alpha + y^\gamma, x^\beta + y^\delta) + (c, d)$  is a bijection on  $V \oplus V$  sending  $\Gamma_f = \{(x, f(x)) \mid x \in V\}$  to  $\Gamma_g$ .*

*If we may take  $\gamma = 0$  in the above,  $f$  is called **extended affine (EA)-equivalent** to  $g$ . Thus  $f$  is EA-equivalent to  $g$  if  $g(x^\alpha + c) = x^\beta + d + f(x)^\delta$  for every  $x \in V$ .*

## 2.4 Some properties on equivalence

**Proposition 1 (Some properties on equivalence)** *If  $f$  is PN (resp. APN), then a function  $g$  graph-equivalent to  $f$  is PN (resp. APN).*

*If  $p$  is odd, then a function graph-equivalent to  $f$  is also EA-equivalent to  $f$ . If  $f$  is DO, then any function EA-equivalent to  $f$  is DO.*

Thus in odd characteristic case, the concept of graph-equivalence coincides with that of EA-equivalence. If  $p = 2$ , there are examples of graph-equivalent APN functions which are EA-inequivalent.

## 2.5 DO functions and quadratic functions

**Definition 3** A function  $f$  on a field  $F \cong \mathbb{F}_{p^n}$  is called Dembowski-Ostrom (DO), if  $f$  is represented by a polynomial in  $F[X]$  of shape

$$a + \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} a_i X^{p^i} + \sum_{0 \leq i < j \leq n-1} a_{ij} X^{p^i + p^j}.$$

If  $p = 2$ , a DO function is referred to as a quadratic function.

## 3 Structures associated with planar functions

### 3.1 A geometric interpretation of a planar function

Let  $f$  be a function on  $V$ . Define an incidence structure  $\mathbb{I}(f)$  as follows: the set of points is  $V \oplus V$ , and the set of lines is  $\{L(a, b), L(c) \mid a, b, c \in V\}$ , where  $L(a, b)$  and  $L(c)$  are just symbols indexed by  $(a, b) \in V^2$  and  $c \in V$ . Incidence is given by  $(x, y) \in L(a, b)$  iff  $y - b = f(x - a)$ , and  $(x, y) \in L(c)$  iff  $x = c$ .

The following is easy to verify (e.g.[2]).

**Proposition 2 (A geometric interpretation of a PN function)** Let  $f$  be a function on  $V$ . Then  $f$  is PN iff  $\mathbb{I}(f)$  is an affine plane.

### 3.2 Algebraic structure associated with a DO planar function

For a function  $f$  on  $V$  and  $0 \neq a \in V$ , we consider the following structure on  $V$ .

**Definition 4 (Algebraic structure  $\mathbb{A}(f)$ )**  $\mathbb{A}(f) := (V; +, \circ_f)$ , where  $\circ_f = \circ$  is an operation on  $V$  defined by  $x \circ y := f(x + y) + f(x) + f(y) + f(0)$  ( $x, y \in V$ ).

If  $f$  is DO and planar (so  $p$  is odd), then the algebraic structure  $\mathbb{A}(f)$  is a commutative presemifield, whose definition will be given below (notice that this definition involves the even characteristic case).

**Definition 5** A presemifield  $V$  is a set with operations  $+$  and  $\circ$ , satisfying:

(S1)  $(V, +)$  is a group with identity element 0.

(S2)  $x \circ (y + z) = x \circ y + x \circ z$  and  $(x + y) \circ z = x \circ z + y \circ z$  for all  $x, y, z \in V$ .

(S3)  $x \circ y = 0$  implies  $x = 0$  or  $y = 0$ .

Let  $f$  be a DO planar function on  $V$ . Then (S2) follows from the assumption that  $f$  is DO. (S3) is equivalent to the condition that  $\delta_y(f) = f(x + y) + f(y) = f(x) + f(0)$  has a single solution  $x$  for each  $0 \neq y \in V$ , which is the definition of a PN function.

### 3.3 Coulter-Henderson's result

In fact, Coulter-Henderson showed that the concept of commutative presemifields with  $p$  odd is equivalent to the concept of DO planar functions. See [2] for the details.

## 4 Structures associated with APN functions

### 4.1 Geometric interpretation of APN functions

Let  $f$  be a function on  $V$ . Define an incidence structure  $\mathbb{I}(f)$  as follows: the set of **points** is  $V \oplus V$ , and the set of **blocks** is  $\{B(a, b) \mid a, b \in V\}$ , where  $B(a, b)$  is just a symbol indexed by  $(a, b) \in V^2$ . Incidence is given by  $(x, y) \in B(a, b)$  iff  $y - b = f(x - a) + f(0)$ . (Notice the similarity of the incidence to that of  $\mathbb{A}(f)$  for PN functions.)

**Proposition 3** [9] *For a function  $f$  on  $V$ ,  $f$  is APN iff the incidence structure  $\mathbb{I}(f)$  is the incidence graph of a semiplane. Two APN functions  $f$  and  $g$  are graph-equivalent iff  $\mathbb{I}(f)$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbb{I}(g)$  as graphs.*

The later part of the proposition was observed by several researchers, including Dillon and Pott [6]. Here we recall a formal definition of a semiplane.

**Definition 6** *An incidence structure  $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{B}; *)$  is called a **semiplane** if for any two distinct elements in  $\mathcal{P}$  (resp.  $\mathcal{B}$ ) there are exactly 0 or 2 elements of  $\mathcal{B}$  (resp.  $\mathcal{P}$ ) incident with both of them, and its incidence graph is connected, where the incidence graph of  $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{B}; *)$  is the graph on  $\mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{B}$  in which two vertices are adjacent if the corresponding elements are incident in  $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{B}; *)$ .*

### 4.2 A geometric interpretation of quadratic APN functions

**Theorem 1** [8] *Let  $f$  be a function on  $V$  with  $\dim(V) = n$  over  $\mathbb{F}_2$ . Then  $f$  is quadratic APN iff the associated structure  $\mathcal{S}[f]$  is a **DHO** over  $\mathbb{F}_2$  (with ambient space of dimension  $2n$  if  $n \geq 3$ ). Two quadratic APN functions  $f$  and  $g$  are extended affine equivalent iff  $\mathcal{S}[f]$  is isomorphic to  $\mathcal{S}[g]$  as dimensional dual hyperovals.*

We recall a formal definition of a DHO (dimensional dual hyperoval).

**Definition 7** *A collection  $\mathcal{S}$  of  $(d + 1)$ -dimensional subspaces of a vector space  $W$  over  $\mathbb{F}_q$  is called a  **$d$ -dimensional dual hyperoval (DHO)** over  $\mathbb{F}_q$ , if any two distinct members of  $\mathcal{S}$  intersect at a 1-dimensional subspace, any three mutually distinct members of  $\mathcal{S}$  intersect at the zero subspace, and  $|\mathcal{S}| = ((q^{d+1} - 1)/(q - 1)) + 1$ .*

*A subspace of  $W$  spanned by all members of  $\mathcal{S}$  is called the **ambient space** of  $\mathcal{S}$ .*

## 5 Universal algebraic observations

In the algebraic structure  $\mathbb{A}(f)$  defined for a function  $f$  on  $F$  (or its underlying space  $V$ ), the multiplication  $\circ$  is given by  $x \circ y = f(x + y) + f(x) + f(y) + f(0)$ . In particular,  $\circ$  is commutative:  $x \circ y = y \circ x$ .

If  $f$  is DO, then  $\circ$  satisfies the left and the right distributive laws. If  $f$  is PN (so that  $p$  is odd), then  $x \circ y = 0$  iff  $x = 0$  or  $y = 0$ . Remark in this case,  $x \circ x \neq 0$  for  $x \neq 0$ . If  $f$  is APN (so that  $p = 2$ ), then  $x \circ y = 0$  iff  $x = 0$  or  $y = 0$  or  $x = y$ .

Summarizing, we have

**Proposition 4 (Algebraic structures for PN and APN functions)** *Assume that  $f$  is a function defined on a finite vector space  $V$  over  $\mathbb{F}_p$  with  $p$  odd (resp.  $p = 2$ ). Then  $f$  is DO and PN (resp. quadratic APN) iff algebraic system  $\mathbb{A}(f)$  satisfies the following (A1)–(A4) (resp. (A1), (A2), (A3') and (A4)):*

(A1)  $(V; +)$  is a vector space over  $\mathbb{F}_p$ .

(A2)  $\circ$  is left and right distributive.

(A3)  $x \circ y = 0$  if and only if  $x = 0$  or  $y = 0$ .

(A3')  $x \circ y = 0$  if and only if  $x = 0$  or  $y = 0$ , or  $x = y$ .

(A4)  $\circ$  is symmetric.

If  $f$  is DO PN (so  $p$  is odd), the axioms (A1)–(A4) are nothing more than axioms for commutative presemifield.

In the rest of this section, we consider an arbitrary algebraic structure  $(V; +, \circ)$  satisfying either axioms (A1)–(A4) (so it is just a commutative semifield) or axioms (A1), (A2), (A3') and (A4). This algebraic consideration allows us to involve commutative presemifields in characteristic  $p = 2$ . This also makes clear the relation between commutative semifields in characteristic 2 and the algebraic structure corresponding to quadratic APN functions.

By axiom (A3) (resp. (A3')) and (A4), the form  $V \times V \ni (x, y) \mapsto x \circ y \in V$  is an **symmetric** (resp. **alternating**) bilinear map on  $V$ . From the universality of tensor product, there is an  $\mathbb{F}_p$ -linear surjection  $\tilde{\rho}$  from  $V \otimes V$  onto  $V$  such that  $\tilde{\rho}(x \otimes y) = x \circ y$  for all  $x, y \in V$ .

As  $\circ$  is symmetric,  $\tilde{\rho}$  vanishes on the subspace  $A(V)$  of  $V \otimes V$  consisting of  $x \otimes y + y \otimes x$  for **distinct**  $x, y \in V$ :  $A(V) := \langle x \otimes y + y \otimes x \mid x, y \in V \rangle$ . (Notice that  $x \otimes x + x \otimes x = 0$  for  $x = y$ , if  $p = 2$ .) Thus  $\tilde{\rho}$  induces a surjective linear map  $\rho$  from  $V \otimes V/A(V)$  onto  $V$ .

If  $f$  is quadratic APN,  $\circ$  vanishes on the larger subspace  $S(V)$  of  $V \otimes V$  spanned by  $A(V)$  and  $V^{(2)} = \{x \otimes x \mid x \in V\}$ : namely,  $S(V) = \langle x \otimes y + y \otimes x, x \otimes x \mid x, y \in V \rangle$ . Thus  $\tilde{\rho}$  induces a surjective linear map  $\rho$  from  $V \otimes V/S(V)$  onto  $V$ .

The kernel  $K := \text{Ker}(\rho)$  has codimension  $n$  in  $(V \otimes V)/A(V)$  or  $(V \otimes V)/S(V)$ , according as  $\circ$  satisfies (A1)–(A4) or (A $i$ ) ( $i = 1, 2, 4$ ) and (A3'). Moreover,  $K$  has the following property by axiom (A3), where  $x \otimes y$  ( $\in V \otimes V$ ) is identified with its image  $(x \otimes y) + A(V)$  in  $(V \otimes V)/A(V)$ :

$$K \cap \{x \otimes y \mid x, y \in V\} = \{0\}.$$

If  $f$  is quadratic APN, then the following property follows from (A3'), where  $x \otimes y$  ( $\in V \otimes V$ ) is identified with its image  $(x \otimes y) + S(V)$  in  $(V \otimes V)/S(V)$ : (notice that as  $x \otimes x \in V^{(2)}$ , we only need  $x \otimes y$  for **distinct**  $x, y \in V$ .)

$$K \cap \{x \otimes y \mid x \neq y \in V\} = \{0\}.$$

Conversely, if a subspace  $K$  of  $W := (V \otimes V)/A(V)$  satisfies

$$\text{codim}(K) = \dim(W) - \dim(K) = n \text{ and } K \cap \{x \otimes y \mid x, y \in V\} = \{0\}.$$

then the operation  $\circ$  on  $(V; +)$  defined by  $x \circ y := \alpha((x \otimes y) + K)$  for  $x, y \in V$  satisfies the axiom of a commutative presemifield, where  $\alpha$  is any isomorphism of  $W/K$  with  $V$ .

Similar conclusion holds for  $\bar{W} := (V \otimes V)/S(V)$ . Namely, if a subspace  $K$  of  $\bar{W} := (V \otimes V)/S(V)$  satisfies the following two properties

$$\text{codim}(K) = \dim(\bar{W}) - \dim(K) = n \text{ and } K \cap \{x \otimes y \mid x \neq y \in V\} = \{0\}.$$

then the operation  $\circ$  on  $(V; +)$  defined by  $x \circ y := \alpha((x \otimes y) + K)$  for  $x, y \in V$  satisfies the axioms (A1),(A2),(A3') and (A4), where  $\alpha$  is any isomorphism of  $\bar{W}/K$  with  $V$ .

## A canonical form of quadratic APN functions

### 5.1 Canonical form of a quadratic APN function

Now we return to the case when  $\circ = \circ_f$  is determined by a quadratic function  $f$  on  $V$ :  $x \circ_f y = f(x + y) + f(x) + f(y) + f(0)$ . Notice that  $\circ_f$  coincides with  $\circ_g$  iff  $f + g$  is an affine function on  $V$ . Hence the conclusion of previous section shows the following canonical description of quadratic APN functions, because  $A(V)$  can be identified with  $(V \otimes V)/S(V)$  via  $x \wedge y \mapsto x \otimes y + S(V)$ .

This result was first obtained by examining the universal DHO of  $S[f]$ .

Let  $\Gamma$  be the set of all  $\mathbb{F}_2$ -linear surjections  $\gamma$  from  $A(V)$  to  $V$  with  $\text{Ker}(\gamma) \cap \{a \wedge b \mid a, b \in V\} = \{0\}$ , and let  $Af$  be the set of  $\mathbb{F}_2$ -affine maps on  $V$ . Fix a basis  $\{e_i\}_{i=1}^n$  for  $V$  over  $\mathbb{F}_2$ . For every  $(\gamma, \alpha)$  of  $\Gamma \times Af$ , the following map  $f_{\gamma, \alpha}$  is quadratic APN on  $V$ :

$$f_{\gamma, \alpha} : a = \sum_{i=1}^n a_i e_i \mapsto \sum_{1 \leq i < j \leq n} a_i a_j (e_i \wedge e_j)^\gamma + a^\alpha.$$

**Theorem 2** [10] *Every quadratic APN map on  $L$  is uniquely written as  $f_{\gamma, \alpha}$  for  $(\gamma, \alpha)$ . Namely, there is a bijection between the set of quadratic APN maps on  $L$  and the set  $\Gamma \times Af$ .*

### 5.2 Equivalence

**Theorem 3** [10] *For two quadratic APN maps  $f_{\gamma, \alpha}$  and  $f_{\gamma', \alpha'}$ , they are EA-equivalent iff  $\text{Ker}(\gamma)$  and  $\text{Ker}(\gamma')$  belong to the same orbit under the diagonal action of  $GL(V)$ :  $g(a \wedge b) = g(a) \wedge g(b)$  ( $a, b \in V$ ).*

### 5.3 Core problem

Thus, finding all the EA-equivalence classes of quadratic APN maps on  $V$  is equivalent to finding all  $GL(V)$ -orbit on the set of subspaces  $K$  of  $(V \otimes V)/S(V) =: \bar{W}$  such that:

$$\text{codim}(K) = \dim(\bar{W}) - \dim(K) = n \text{ and } K \cap \{a \wedge b \mid a \neq b \in V\} = \{0\}$$

We call a subspace  $K$  of  $\bar{W}$  with the above property **line-skew**.

When  $p = 2$ ,  $\bar{W} = (V \otimes V)/S(V)$  is a quotient of  $W = (V \otimes V)/A(V)$ .

**(Question)** Are there some relations between subspaces  $K$  of codimension  $n$  in  $W$  which yield commutative semifields (namely,  $K \cap \{x \otimes y \mid x, y \in V\} = \{0\}$ ) and subspaces  $\bar{K}$  of codimension  $n$  in  $\bar{W}$  which yield quadratic APN functions (namely,  $\bar{K} \cap \{x \otimes y \mid x \neq y \in V\} = \{0\}$ ).

## 6 Some explicit description of $A(V)$

### 6.1 Alternating form scheme $Alt(V)$

We assume that  $p = 2$ . Then  $(V \otimes V)/S(V) \cong A(V)$  by identifying  $x \otimes y + S(V)$  with  $x \wedge y := x \otimes y - y \otimes x$ .

$A(V)$  can also be identified with the space  $Alt(V)$  of all alternating bilinear forms on  $V$ , by identifying  $x \wedge y$  with the alternating form of rank 1 with  $f(x, y) = 1$ . Here the rank of an alternating form  $f$  is  $(\dim(V) - \dim Rad(f))/2$ .

Recall that  $Alt(V)$  is an association scheme with respect to the distance  $\delta$  given by  $\delta(f, g) =$  the rank of  $f - g$ . Thus a subspace  $K$  of  $Alt(V)$  of codimension  $n$  is line-skew iff it does not contain form of rank 1 iff any two distinct forms of  $K$  are at distance at least 2.

### 6.2 Line skew subspace as designs in $Alt(V)$

Delsarte and Goethals [3] investigated a subset  $D$  of  $Alt(V)$  in which two distinct elements are at distance at least  $d$ . They obtained the bound  $|D| \leq 2^{n(n+1-2d)/2}$  or  $|D| \leq 2^{(n-1)(n+2-2d)/2}$  according as  $n$  is odd or even. As  $\dim(K) = \dim(Alt(V)) - n = n(n-3)/2$ , this bound is attained by  $K$  if  $n$  is odd.

With current terminologies in algebraic combinatorics, we have:

**Proposition 5 (Line-skew space as Delsarte design)** *Assume that  $n = 2m + 1$  is odd. A subspace  $K$  of  $Alt(V)$  is line-skew iff it is a  $(m - 1)$ -design in  $Alt(V)$  in the sense of Delsarte.*

The previous theorem gives us several strong information about a line-skew subspace, if  $\dim(V) = n$  is odd (e.g. [7]). However, so far I could not obtain explicit informations on the numbers of such spaces.

### 6.3 Another explicit description of $Alt(V)$

We identify  $V$  with the field  $F \cong \mathbb{F}_{2^n}$ , and denote by  $F_0 \cong \mathbb{F}_{2^{n/2}}$  the subfield of  $F$  of degree 2 if  $n$  is even. We set  $l = \lfloor n/2 \rfloor$ .

Then  $Alt(V)$  is isomorphic to  $V^l = V^m = \{(b_k)_{k=1}^l \mid b_k \in V\}$  if  $n = 2m + 1$  is odd, and to the subspace of  $V^l$  with  $b_l$  lies in  $F_0$  if  $n = 2m + 2$  is even.

The explicit isomorphism can be described. In particular,

**Proposition 6 (Subsets corresponding to rank 1 forms)** *the set of rank 1 alternating forms corresponds to  $\mathcal{L} := \{(x^{2^k+1}(y + y^{2^k}))_{k=1}^l \mid x, y \in F \setminus \mathbb{F}_2\}$ .*

### 6.4 Some line-skwe subspaces

For every  $1 \leq e \leq l$  coprime with  $n$ , the  $e$ -th entry  $x^{2^e+1}(y + y^{2^e})$  is nonzero for any vector  $(x^{2^k+1}(y + y^{2^k}))_{k=1}^l$  of  $\mathcal{L}$ . Thus the subspace  $K_e$  of  $V^l$  consisting of all vectors  $(b_k)$  with  $b_k = 0$  does not contain any vector of  $\mathcal{L}$ . As  $K_e$  has codimension  $n$  in  $Alt(V)$  (identified with the subspace of  $V^l$  described above),  $K_e$  is a line-skew subspace. The



canonical projection map  $\rho : \text{Alt}(V) \rightarrow \text{Alt}(V)/K_e$  composed with an identification  $\text{Alt}(V)/K_e \ni (b_k)_{k=1}^l + K_e \mapsto b_k \in V$  gives  $x \wedge y \mapsto x^{2^e}y + xy^{2^e}$ . Hence this corresponds to the Gold function  $g(x) = x^{2^e+1}$ .

We also have line-skew subspace  $K$  consisting of  $(b_k)_{k=1}^l$  with  $b_1 + \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} b_3^{2^i}$ . This gives the APN map  $f(x) = x^3 + \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} (x^9)^{2^i}$ .

When  $n = 10$ ,  $K = \{(b_k)_{k=1}^5 \mid b_1 = ub_3^4\}$  is a line-skew subspace yielding APN function  $e(x) = x^3 + ux^{36}$ .

## 6.5 Some comments

The last description of  $\text{Alt}(V)$  seems explicit enough to find ‘easy’ examples of skew-free subspaces, and so quadratic APN functions.

Recently, Dillon, Edel and Pott [5] introduce the idea of ‘switching’ of APN functions, and produces many new examples of APN functions (including non-quadratic examples). In my setting, switching relation may be interpreted as two line-skew subspaces sharing a hyperplane. I am wondering if this suggests some new direction to generalize the idea of switching.

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