# 5. Reed-Solomon Codes

# Generalized Reed-Solomon Codes

- Let $\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \ldots, \alpha_n$, $n < q$, be distinct nonzero elements of $\mathbb{F}_q$, and let $v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n$ be *nonzero* elements of $\mathbb{F}_q$ (not necessarily distinct). A *generalized Reed-Solomon (GRS)* code is a linear $[n, k, d]$ code $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ over $\mathbb{F}_q$, with PCM

$$H_{\mathrm{GRS}} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & \ldots & 1 \\ \alpha_1 & \alpha_2 & \ldots & \alpha_n \\ \alpha_1^2 & \alpha_2^2 & \ldots & \alpha_n^2 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \alpha_1^{n-k-1} & \alpha_2^{n-k-1} & \ldots & \alpha_n^{n-k-1} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & & & 0 \\ & v_2 & & \\ 0 & & \ddots & \\ & & & v_n \end{pmatrix}.$$

$\alpha_j$: *column locators* (distinct), $v_j$: *column multipliers* ($\neq 0$)

**Theorem**

*$\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ is an MDS code, namely, $d = n - k + 1$.*

**Proof.** Any subset of $r = n - k$ distinct columns of the left part of $H_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ has the form of a Vandermonde matrix defined by distinct elements, which is nonsingular. Hence, $d \geq n - k + 1$. By Singleton's bound, $d = n - k + 1$. □

$$X = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & \cdots & 1 \\ x_1 & x_2 & \cdots & x_r \\ x_1^2 & x_2^2 & \cdots & x_r^2 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ x_1^{r-1} & x_2^{r-1} & \cdots & x_r^{r-1} \end{bmatrix}$$

$$|X| = \prod_{i<j}(x_j - x_i)$$

# About column multipliers

Let $\boldsymbol{\alpha} = (\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \ldots, \alpha_n)$, $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n)$, and define

$$M_{n-k}(\boldsymbol{\alpha}) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & \ldots & 1 \\ \alpha_1 & \alpha_2 & \ldots & \alpha_n \\ \alpha_1^2 & \alpha_2^2 & \ldots & \alpha_n^2 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \alpha_1^{n-k-1} & \alpha_2^{n-k-1} & \ldots & \alpha_n^{n-k-1} \end{pmatrix}, \; D(\mathbf{v}) = \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & & & 0 \\ & v_2 & & \\ 0 & & \ddots & \\ & & & v_n \end{pmatrix}.$$

- We have $H_{\mathrm{GRS}} = M_{n-k}(\boldsymbol{\alpha})D(\mathbf{v})$. Consider the code $\mathcal{C}'_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ with PCM $H'_{\mathrm{GRS}} = M_{n-k}(\boldsymbol{\alpha})$.
- Clearly, $H_{\mathrm{GRS}}\mathbf{c}^T = 0 \Leftrightarrow H'_{\mathrm{GRS}}(D(\mathbf{v})\mathbf{c}^T)) = 0$: the codewords of $\mathcal{C}'_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ are the same as the codewords of $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{GRS}}$, but with the value in coordinate $j$ multiplied by $v_j$, $1 \le j \le n$.
- $\mathcal{C}'_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ has the same parameters $[n, k, d]$ as $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ ($d$ is preserved since all $v_j$ are nonzero). Column multipliers seem to make no difference (???).
- However, column multipliers do make a *big* difference on the properties of *sub-field sub-codes* of GRS codes. Also, certain choices of multipliers (and locators) have advantages when implementing encoders/decoders.

# Generator matrices and dual codes

**Theorem**

*Let* $H = M_{n-k}(\boldsymbol{\alpha})D(\mathbf{v})$ *be a PCM of* $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{GRS}}$*. Then,* $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ *has a generator matrix of the form* $G = M_k(\boldsymbol{\alpha})D(\mathbf{v}')$*, for some choice of* $\mathbf{v}'$ *(and the same* $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$*). Hence, the dual code of* $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{GRS}}$ *is also a GRS code.*

**Proof.** Typical rows of such $G$, and of $H$, have the form

$$\begin{aligned} G_i &= [v_1'\alpha_1^i,\, v_2'\alpha_2^i,\, \ldots,\, v_n'\alpha_n^i],\ 0 \le i \le k-1, \\ H_j &= [v_1\alpha_1^j,\, v_2\alpha_2^j,\, \ldots,\, v_n\alpha_n^j],\ 0 \le j \le n-k-1\,. \end{aligned}$$

We have

$$G_i \cdot H_j^T = \sum_{\ell=1}^{n} v_\ell v_\ell' \alpha_\ell^{i+j},\ \ 0 \le i \le k-1,\ 0 \le j \le n-k-1,$$

with $0 \le i+j \le n-2$. Therefore, $GH^T = 0$ if and only if

$$\sum_{\ell=1}^{n} v_\ell v_\ell' \alpha_\ell^t = 0, \quad 0 \le t \le n-2\,.$$

These equations can be written in matrix form as $M_{n-1}(\boldsymbol{\alpha})D(\mathbf{v})(\mathbf{v}')^T = 0$. Now, $M_{n-1}(\boldsymbol{\alpha})D(\mathbf{v})$ is the PCM of an $[n,1,n]$ GRS code, which has nonzero codewords. Taking $\mathbf{v}'$ to be such a codeword, the equations are satisfied. This codeword has weight $n$, hence all $v_j'$ are nonzero. □

# Distinguished Classes of GRS Codes

- *Primitive GRS codes:* $n = q-1$ and $\{\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \ldots, \alpha_n\} = F^*$; usually $\alpha_i = \alpha^{i-1}$ for a primitive $\alpha \in \mathbb{F}$.
- *Normalized GRS codes:* $v_j = 1$ for all $1 \leq j \leq n$.
- *Narrow-sense GRS codes:* $v_j = \alpha_j$ for all $1 \leq j \leq n$.
- Allowing one $\alpha_i = 0$ (column $[1\,0\,\ldots\,0]^T$, not in narrow sense GRS): *(singly) extended GRS code* $\implies$ $n \leq q$
- Allowing one $\alpha_i = \infty$ (column $[0\,\ldots\,0\,1]^T$, not in narrow sense GRS): *(doubly) extended GRS code* $\implies$ $n \leq q+1$

**Example.** Let $v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n$ be the column multipliers of a primitive GRS code. We can verify that the dual GRS code has column multipliers $\alpha_j / v_j$

$$\implies \quad \text{(normalized primitive GRS)}^\perp = \text{(narrow-sense primitive GRS)}.$$

# GRS Encoding as Polynomial Evaluation

- For $\mathbf{u} = (u_0\, u_1\ \ldots\ u_{k-1})$, let $u(x) = u_0 + u_1 x + u_2 x^2 + \cdots + u_{k-1} x^{k-1}$. Then,

$$\mathbf{c} = \mathbf{u}\, G_{\mathrm{GRS}} = (u_0\, u_1 \ldots u_{k-1}) \cdot \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & \ldots & 1 \\ \alpha_1 & \alpha_2 & \ldots & \alpha_n \\ \alpha_1^2 & \alpha_2^2 & \ldots & \alpha_n^2 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \alpha_1^{k-1} & \alpha_2^{k-1} & \ldots & \alpha_n^{k-1} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} v_1' & & & 0 \\ & v_2' & & \\ 0 & & \ddots & \\ & & & v_n' \end{pmatrix}$$

$$= [\, v_1' u(\alpha_1)\ \ v_2' u(\alpha_2)\ \ \ldots\ \ v_n' u(\alpha_n)\, ]$$

- Minimum distance now follows from the fact that a polynomial of degree $\leq k-1$ cannot have more than $k-1$ roots in $\mathbb{F}_q \implies \mathrm{wt}(\mathbf{c}) \geq n-k+1$.
- Decoding as *noisy interpolation*: reconstruct $u(x)$ from $(k+2t)$ noisy evaluations $u(\alpha_1)+e_1,\ u(\alpha_2)+e_2, \ldots, u(\alpha_{k+2t})+e_{k+2t}$, possible if at most $t$ evaluations are corrupted.

# Refresher: shortening a linear code

Given an $[n, k, d]$ code, we can obtain an $[n-\ell, k-\ell, d]$ code, $1 \le \ell \le k$, by

1. selecting all the codewords that start with $\ell$ zeros,
2. deleting the first $\ell$ coordinates.

If the code is systematic, this can be visualized as follows

$$\mathbf{u}\,G = \mathbf{u}\,\left(I_{k\times k} | A_{k\times(n-k)}\right)$$

$$= [\underbrace{0, 0, \ldots, 0}_{\ell}, u_{k-\ell-1}, \ldots, u_0] \left(\begin{array}{c|c|c} I_\ell & \mathbf{0}_{\ell\times k-\ell} & A^U_{\ell\times(n-k)} \\ \hline \mathbf{0}_{(k-\ell)\times k} & I_{k-\ell} & A^L_{(k-\ell)\times(n-k)} \end{array}\right)$$

Generator matrix of the shortened code

Shortening is equivalent to setting the first $\ell$ message symbols to zero and then ignoring them.
In terms of the systematic generator matrix, it is equivalent to taking the lower-right $(k-\ell)\times(n-\ell)$ corner of the original matrix.

# Conventional Reed-Solomon Codes

- *Conventional Reed-Solomon (RS)* code $\mathcal{C}_{\rm RS}$: GRS code with $n|(q-1)$, $\alpha \in \mathbb{F}^*$ with $\mathcal{O}(\alpha) = n$,

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha_j &= \alpha^{j-1}\,, \quad 1 \le j \le n, \\ v_j &= \alpha^{b(j-1)}\,, \quad 1 \le j \le n, \;\; b \in \mathbb{Z}. \end{aligned}$$

  - Commonly, $n = q-1$: *primitive code*.
  - Code can be shortened to any length $n' \le n$.
    - Two ways to get shorter codes: choose $n|(q-1),\ n < q-1$, or shorten by setting message digits to zero (or do both).

- *Canonical PCM* of a RS code is given by

$$H_{\rm RS} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \alpha^b & \alpha^{2b} & \cdots & \alpha^{(n-1)b} \\ 1 & \alpha^{b+1} & \alpha^{2(b+1)} & \cdots & \alpha^{(n-1)(b+1)} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \\ 1 & \alpha^{b+r-1} & \alpha^{2(b+r-1)} & \cdots & \alpha^{(n-1)(b+r-1)} \end{pmatrix}$$

#rows $= r = n-k = d-1$

# Conventional Reed-Solomon Codes

$$H_{\mathrm{RS}} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \alpha^{b} & \alpha^{2b} & \cdots & \alpha^{(n-1)b} \\ 1 & \alpha^{b+1} & \alpha^{2(b+1)} & \cdots & \alpha^{(n-1)(b+1)} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \\ 1 & \alpha^{b+r-1} & \alpha^{2(b+r-1)} & \cdots & \alpha^{(n-1)(b+r-1)} \end{pmatrix}$$

#rows $= r = n{-}k = d{-}1$

- Associate $\mathbf{c} = [c_0, c_1, \ldots, c_{n-1}] \in \mathbb{F}^n$ with $c(x) = \sum_{\ell=0}^{n-1} c_i x^i \in \mathbb{F}[x]$.
- $\mathbf{c} \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}} \iff H_{\mathrm{RS}}\mathbf{c}^T = \mathbf{0}$.
- For a typical row $\bar{\mathbf{h}}_i$ of $H_{\mathrm{RS}}$, $\bar{\mathbf{h}}_i \mathbf{c}^T = \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} \left(\alpha^{b+i}\right)^j c_j = c(\alpha^{b+i})$.
  Therefore, $\mathbf{c} \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}} \iff c(\alpha^\ell) = 0, \quad \ell = b, b{+}1, \ldots, b{+}r{-}1$.
- $\alpha^b, \alpha^{b+1}, \ldots, \alpha^{b+r-1}$: *roots* of $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}}$.
- $g(x) = (x{-}\alpha^b)(x{-}\alpha^{b+1})\cdots(x{-}\alpha^{b+r-1})$:
  *generator polynomial* of $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}}$.
  $\deg(g) = r = n - k$

# RS Codes as Cyclic codes (another polynomial characterization)

- $\mathbf{c} \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}} \iff c(\alpha^\ell) = 0, \quad \ell = b, b+1, \ldots, b+r-1$
- $g(x) = (x - \alpha^b)(x - \alpha^{b+1}) \cdots (x - \alpha^{b+r-1}) \qquad (\deg(g) = r)$

  Therefore, $\mathbf{c} \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}} \iff g(x) | c(x)$ and

  $$\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}} = \{ u(x)g(x) \ : \ \deg(u) < k \} \subseteq \mathbb{F}_q[x]_n$$

  Every root of $g(x)$ is also a root of $x^n - 1 \implies g(x) \,|\, x^n - 1$.
- $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}}$ is the *ideal* generated by $g(x)$ in the ring $\mathbb{F}_q[x]/\langle x^n - 1 \rangle$.
- RS codes are *cyclic*: $c(x) \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}} \implies xc(x) \mod (x^n - 1) \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}}$, or

  $$\mathbf{c} = [\, c_0 \, c_1 \, \ldots \, c_{n-1} \,] \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}} \implies [\, c_{n-1} \, c_0 \, c_1 \, \ldots \, c_{n-2} \,] \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}}$$

- Distinguished RS codes
  - Primitive RS: $n = q - 1$, $\alpha$ primitive element of $\mathbb{F}_q$
  - Narrow-sense RS: $b = 1$ (*common choice*)
  - Normalized RS: $b = 0$
- Cyclic property is not preserved if we shorten the code, but the other properties are.

# Encoding RS codes

- We saw the *polynomial evaluation* interpretation of GRS encoding

$$\mathbf{c} = \mathbf{u}G_{\mathrm{GRS}} = \mathbf{u} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & \dots & 1 \\ \alpha_1 & \alpha_2 & \dots & \alpha_n \\ \alpha_1^2 & \alpha_2^2 & \dots & \alpha_n^2 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \alpha_1^{k-1} & \alpha_2^{k-1} & \dots & \alpha_n^{k-1} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} v_1' & & & 0 \\ & v_2' & & \\ 0 & & \ddots & \\ & & & v_n' \end{pmatrix}$$

$$= [\, v_1' u(\alpha_1)\ v_2' u(\alpha_2)\ \dots\ v_n' u(\alpha_n)\,] \qquad \textit{non-systematic}$$

- In the *polynomial ideal* interpretation of RS codes: $u(x) \mapsto u(x)g(x)$, corresponds to a non-systematic generator matrix

$$G = \begin{pmatrix} g_0 & g_1 & \dots & g_{n-k} & & & 0 \\ & g_0 & g_1 & \dots & g_{n-k} & & \\ 0 & & \ddots & \ddots & \dots & \ddots & \\ & & & g_0 & g_1 & \dots & g_{n-k} \end{pmatrix} \qquad (g_{n-k} = 1)$$

How about a systematic encoding?

# Systematic Encoding of RS Codes

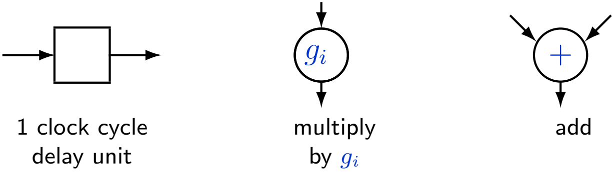
- For $u(x) \in \mathbb{F}_q[x]_k$, let $r_u(x)$ be the unique polynomial in $\mathbb{F}_q[x]_{n-k}$ such that
$$r_u(x) \equiv x^{n-k}u(x) \mod g(x)$$

- Let $c(x) = x^{n-k}u(x) - r_u(x)$.
Clearly, $g(x) \mid c(x)$, and $\deg(c(x)) \leq n-1$, so
$$c(x) \in \mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}}$$

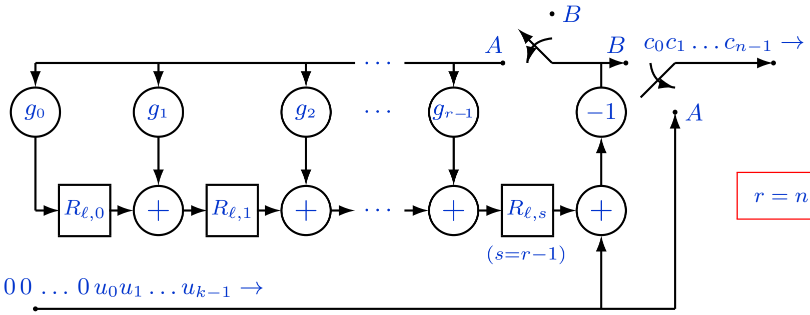
- The mapping $\mathcal{E}_{\mathrm{RS}} : u(x) \mapsto c(x) = x^{n-k}u(x) - r_u(x)$ is a *linear, systematic* encoding for $\mathcal{C}_{\mathrm{RS}}$

$$\begin{array}{rcccccccc}
 & [\; u_{k-1} & u_{k-2} & \dots & u_0 & 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 \;] \\
 -& [\; 0 & 0 & \dots & 0 & r_{n-k-1} & r_{n-k-2} & \dots & r_0 \;] \\
\hline
 & [\; c_{n-1} & c_{n-2} & \dots & c_{n-k} & c_{n-k-1} & c_{n-k-2} & \dots & c_0 \;] \\
 & \multicolumn{4}{c}{\longleftarrow k \longrightarrow} & \multicolumn{4}{c}{\longleftarrow n-k \longrightarrow}
\end{array}$$

# Circuit elements for a systematic encoder



# Systematic Encoding Circuit




$r = n - k$

Switches:

- at $A$ for $k$ cycles
- at $B$ for $r{=}n{-}k$ cycles

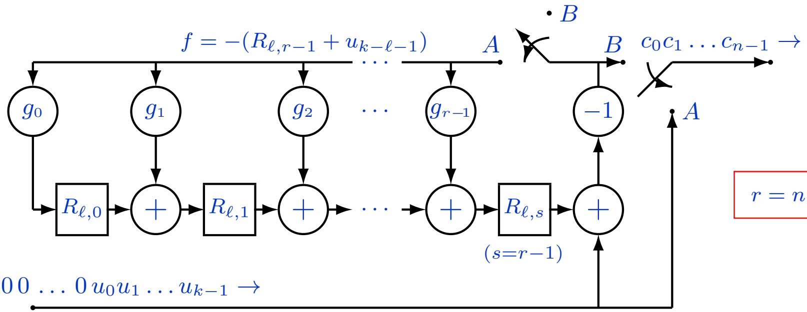
Register contents:

$$R_\ell(x) = \sum_{i=0}^{r-1} R_{\ell,i} x^i, \quad 1 \le \ell \le k,$$

with initial condition

$$R_0(x) = 0$$

# Systematic Encoding Circuit




$r = n - k$

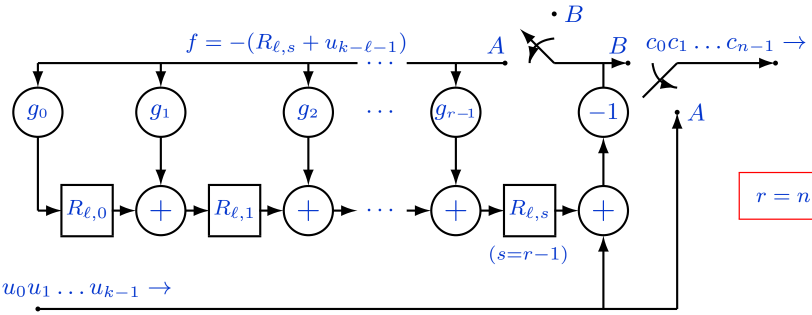
$$g(x) = x^r + g_{r-1}x^{r-1} + g_{r-2}x^{r-2} + \cdots + g_1 x + g_0 \triangleq x^r + \bar{g}(x)$$

Notice: $\bar{g}(x) \equiv -x^r \bmod g(x)$.

One step while switches are at $A$:

$$\begin{aligned} R_{\ell+1}(x) &= xR_\ell(x) - R_{\ell,r-1}x^r + \bar{g}(x)f \\ &= xR_\ell(x) \underbrace{-R_{\ell,r-1}x^r - \bar{g}(x)R_{\ell,r-1}}_{-R_{\ell,r-1}g(x)} \underbrace{-\bar{g}(x)u_{k-\ell-1}}_{x^r u_{k-\ell-1}} \\ &\equiv \left( xR_\ell(x) + x^r u_{k-\ell-1} \right) \bmod g(x) \end{aligned}$$

# Systematic Encoding Circuit




$r = n - k$

Switches:

- at $A$ for $k$ cycles
- at $B$ for $r{=}n{-}k$ cycles

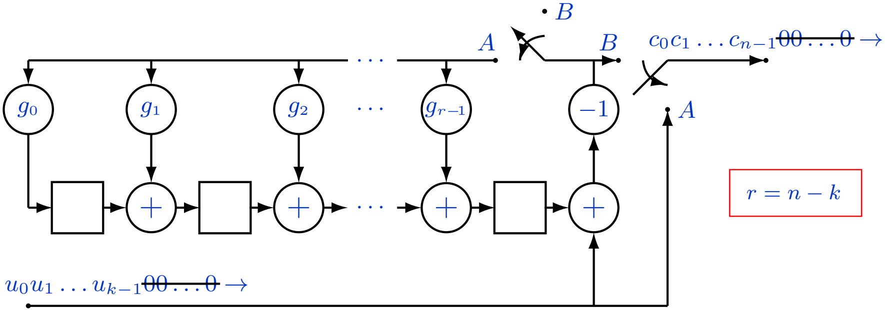
Register contents: $R_0(x) = 0$

$$
\begin{aligned}
R_{\ell+1}(x) &= xR_\ell(x) + x^r u_{k-\ell-1} \\
&= x^2 R_{\ell-1}(x) + x^r \left(x u_{k-\ell} + u_{k-\ell-1}\right) \\
&= x^r \sum_{i=1}^{\ell+1} u_{k-i} x^{\ell+1-i} \mod g(x)
\end{aligned}
$$

$$\ell = 0, 1, \ldots, k-1\,.$$

$$R_k(x) = x^r \sum_{i=1}^{k} u_{k-i} x^{k-i} \bmod g(x) = x^r u(x) \bmod g(x)\,.$$

# Shortened RS codes: Encoding Circuit

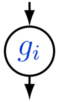



$r = n - k$

*The "conceptual" zeros are never stored or manipulated. They do not participate in any computation.*

# Constant multipliers

Assume $q = 2^m$. Multiplying by a constant $g_i \in \mathrm{GF}(2^m)$ is a linear transformation over $\mathrm{GF}(2)$.




- If elements are represented as $m$-vectors over $\mathrm{GF}(2)$, the transformation can be implemented via multiplication by an $m \times m$ matrix with entries in $\mathrm{GF}(2)$, i.e., computing $m$ XOR sums, each over a subset of the $m$ input bits.

  **Example:** Multiply generic $\beta : [\beta_0\ \beta_1\ \beta_2\ \beta_3]$ by $\alpha^8$ in $\mathrm{GF}(2^4)$.

$$\alpha^8\beta \quad \longleftrightarrow \quad \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \beta_0 \\ \beta_1 \\ \beta_2 \\ \beta_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \beta_0 + \beta_2 \\ \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 \\ \beta_0 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 \\ \beta_1 + \beta_3 \end{bmatrix}$$

- We have $r$ such multipliers in the encoder, all sharing the same input. If we have $g_i = g_j$ for some $i \neq j$, the output from the $g_i$ multiplier can be re-used, and fed to the adder in the $j$-th stage of the register (eliminating the $g_j$ multiplier). This would save hardware resources.

# Palindromic generator polynomial

$$g(x) = x^r + g_{r-1}x^{r-1} + \cdots + g_1 x + g_0,$$

with $g_0 \neq 0$. Reversed:

$$\overleftarrow{g}(x) = g_0 x^r + g_1 x^{r-1} + \cdots + g_{r-1}x + 1$$

We have $\overleftarrow{g}(x) = x^r g(x^{-1})$, so, $\beta$ is a root of $g(x)$ iff $\beta^{-1}$ is a root of $\overleftarrow{g}(x)$.
Can we make $g(x) = \overleftarrow{g}(x)$ (*palindromic*)? This would make $g_0 = 1$, $g_1 = g_{r-1}$, $g_2 = g_{r-2}$, ...

*Yes*, if the set of roots is closed under inversion. Assume $q = 2^m$.

If $r$ is even, choose $b = \frac{q}{2} - \frac{r}{2}$.

If $r$ is odd, choose $b = -\frac{r-1}{2}$

(equivalently, $b = q - 1 - \frac{r-1}{2}$ ).