

We want to show the dual tensor relation

$$\epsilon^{ijk\dots n} R^{ip} R^{jq} = \epsilon^{pqr\dots s} R^{kr} \dots R^{ns} \quad (1)$$

given the determinant relation

$$\epsilon^{ijk\dots n} R^{ip} R^{jq} R^{kr} \dots R^{ns} = \epsilon^{pqr\dots s} \quad (2)$$

First we should see how to interpret (1): it is a claim about any combination of p, q, k, \dots, n (because i, j on LHS and r, \dots, s on RHS are dummy indices).

For example, when $N = 3$, and choose $p = 2, q = 1, k = 2$ (due to ϵ^{pqr} on the RHS, p, q must be different, k can be free). Then we must have $r = 3$, so (1) is really a claim about $R^{kr} = R^{23}$:

$$\epsilon^{ij2} R^{i2} R^{j1} = \epsilon^{213} R^{23} \quad \text{or equivalently} \quad R^{32} R^{11} - R^{12} R^{31} = -R^{23}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \widetilde{R^{11}} & \widetilde{R^{12}} & \widetilde{R^{13}} \\ \widetilde{R^{21}} & \widetilde{R^{22}} & \widetilde{R^{23}} \\ \widetilde{R^{31}} & \widetilde{R^{32}} & \widetilde{R^{33}} \end{bmatrix}$$

which is recognized as the cross-product relations in 3 dimensional space. Similarly for other combinations of p, q, k .

Another example for $N = 4$ is by considering $p = 3, q = 1, k = 1, n = 3$, then the claim (1) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \epsilon^{ij13} R^{i3} R^{j1} &= \epsilon^{31rs} R^{1r} R^{3s} \iff \\ \epsilon^{2413} R^{23} R^{41} + \epsilon^{4213} R^{43} R^{21} &= \epsilon^{3124} R^{12} R^{34} + \epsilon^{3142} R^{14} R^{32} \iff \\ -R^{23} R^{41} + R^{43} R^{21} &= R^{12} R^{34} - R^{14} R^{32} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \widetilde{R^{11}} & \widetilde{R^{12}} & \widetilde{R^{13}} & \widetilde{R^{14}} \\ \widetilde{R^{21}} & \widetilde{R^{22}} & \widetilde{R^{23}} & \widetilde{R^{24}} \\ \widetilde{R^{31}} & \widetilde{R^{32}} & \widetilde{R^{33}} & \widetilde{R^{34}} \\ \widetilde{R^{41}} & \widetilde{R^{42}} & \widetilde{R^{43}} & \widetilde{R^{44}} \end{bmatrix}$$

which is also recognized as a relation of sub-blocks of a 4×4 orthogonal matrix.

We use $N = 4$ to prove (1), the same argument applies to higher dimensions.

For $N = 4$, (2) will be written as

$$\epsilon^{ijkn} R^{ip} R^{jq} R^{kr} R^{ns} = \epsilon^{pqrs} \quad (3)$$

Now define

$$u^n = \epsilon^{ijkn} R^{ip} R^{jq} R^{kr}$$

then (3) can be interpreted as an inner product relation

$$u^n R^{ns} = \epsilon^{pqrs} \quad (4)$$

between the two N -dimensional vectors u and R^s - the s -th column of R .

Since R is orthogonal matrix, its column vectors form an orthonormal basis of the N dimensional space. (4) tells us how the vector u projects onto the s -th column R^s . If we make s range over $1 \dots N$, we know how u will decompose into this basis. In other words

$$u = \epsilon^{pqrs} R^s$$

with repeated index s being summed over.

Certainly for each component n , we have

$$\epsilon^{ijkn} R^{ip} R^{jq} R^{kr} = u^n = \epsilon^{pqrs} R^{ns} \quad (5)$$

Now we repeat the same argument with (5) and define $v^k = \epsilon^{ijkn} R^{ip} R^{jq}$ for a given fixed n , then the inner product relation

$$v^k R^{kr} = \epsilon^{pqrs} R^{ns}$$

implies the decomposition of v :

$$v = \epsilon^{pqrs} R^{ns} R^r$$

and singling out the k -th component will yield the desired equality

$$\epsilon^{ijkn} R^{ip} R^{jq} = v^k = \epsilon^{pqrs} R^{ns} R^{kr}$$