On The Expansion Of Algebraic Expressions In Geometric Algebra

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Abstract. Abstract goes here...

Keywords. Key words go here...

1. Introduction

While the expansion of algebraic expressions taken from, say, a polynomial ring, are found as a trivial matter of applying the associative and distributive properties, and combining like-terms, it is interesting to note that this is certainly not true of expressions taken from a geometric algebra. In this paper, a general stratagy, or algorithm, if you will, is given for the expansion of such expressions, and it is shown that it is perhaps just as natural to write an element of a geometric algebra as a sum of "mercers" as it is to write such an element as a sum of blades. The term "mercer" is introduced in Table 1 below, along with similar, traditional terms found in geometric algebra.[1]

Table 1. Terms used in GA

Term	Definition
Blade	The outer product of zero or more linearly-independent vectors.
Versor	The geometric product of zero or more invertible vectors, not necessarily forming a linearly-independent set.
Mercer	The geometric product of zero or more vectors, not necessarily invertible and not necessarily forming a linearly-independent set.

[1]The term "versor" was avoided in this paper in favour of "mercer" as a matter of rigour. Not knowing a term for the algebraic form in question, and not finding one in the literature, one was made up.

From these it is clear that every versor is a mercer, but not every mercer is a versor.

Similar to the concept of grade, that of rank will be introduced in this paper with respect to mercers. As an n-blade refers to a blade of grade n, we will let an n-mercer refer to a mercer of rank n; that is, a geometric product of precisely n vectors. Note that blades of grade zero are indistinguishable from mercers of the same rank as each denotes the set of all scalars.

Unlike versors, note that mercers do not form a group by simple reason that not every mercer is invertible with respect to the geometric product. They are important to study, none-the-less, because they appear more often in consideration of the typical expression taken from a geometric algebra.

2. Symmetry Between The Outer And Geometric Products

As will be shown by the results established in this section, there is perhaps a lot more in common between the outer and geometric products than one might think. Certainly the outer and inner products play a complementary role in the building up or tearing down of blades, respectively, but from a purely algebraic perspective, consider the following well-known definition of the geometric product between two vectors a and b.

$$ab = a \cdot b + a \wedge b \tag{2.1}$$

The right-hand side of equation (2.1) is a sum of blades, while the left-hand side is a sum of mercers; in this case, exactly one; namely, ab. Thus, the element ab appears naturally in a sum-of-blades and that-of-mercers form, but what of the element $a \wedge b$? Rearranging (2.1), we simply find that

$$a \wedge b = -a \cdot b + ab, \tag{2.2}$$

showing that it too may be written as a sum of blades or that of mercers. In fine, one aim of this paper is to show that while every element has a sum-of-blades form, it too has a sum-of-mercers form.

2.1. From Inner Product To Sum Of Blades

Letting v denote a vector and B_r a blade of grade r having the factorization given in equation (4.1), we wish here to express the inner product $v \cdot B_r$ as a sum of blades. Since the case $r = 1$ is trivial, we begin by writing, for all $r > 1$,

$$\begin{aligned}
a \cdot B_r &= a \cdot (B_{r-1} \wedge b_r) \\
&= (-1)^{r-1} a \cdot (b_r \wedge B_{r-1}) &(2.3)\\
&= -(-1)^r \left(-b_r \wedge (a \cdot B_{r-1}) + (a \cdot b_r) B_{r-1}\right) &(2.4)\\
&= -(-1)^r \left(-(-1)^r (a \cdot B_{r-1}) \wedge b_r + (a \cdot b_r) B_{r-1}\right) \\
&= (a \cdot B_{r-1}) \wedge b_r - (-1)^r (a \cdot b_r) B_{r-1}. &(2.5)
\end{aligned}$$

Here, we've gone from equation (2.3) to that of (2.4) by applying the identity given in equation (4.5).

Applied recursively, it is easy to see here from equation (2.5) that the expansion of $a \cdot B_r$ as a sum of blades is given by

$$a \cdot B_r = -\sum_{i=1}^{r} (-1)^i (a \cdot b_i) \bigwedge_{j=1, j \neq i}^{r} b_j. \tag{2.6}$$

One might also simply use equation (2.5) to given an inductive argument of equation (2.6).

2.2. From Inner Product To Sum Of Mercers

Letting v denote a vector and M_r a mercer of rank r having the factorization given in equation (4.7), we wish here to express the inner product $v \cdot M_r$ as a sum of mercers.

3. The Expansion Algorithm

4. Appendix Of Identities

Identities used in this paper are thrown into this appendix so as not to encumber the main body of the paper.

4.1. Identities Involving Blades

Letting v denote a vector, and B_r a blade of grade r having factorization

$$B_r = \bigwedge_{i=1}^{r} b_i, \tag{4.1}$$

recall that

$$vB_r = v \cdot B_r + v \wedge B_r. \tag{4.2}$$

Recalling also the commutativities of v with B_r in the inner and outer products, we find that

$$v \cdot B_r = \frac{1}{2}(vB_r - (-1)^r B_r v), \tag{4.3}$$

$$v \wedge B_r = \frac{1}{2}(vB_r + (-1)^r B_r v). \tag{4.4}$$

Now letting a and b each denote a vector, it is not hard to show that

$$a \cdot (b \wedge B_r) + b \wedge (a \cdot B_r) = (a \cdot b)B_r. \tag{4.5}$$

To that end, we apply equations (4.3) and (4.4) in writing

$$\begin{aligned}
a \cdot (b \wedge B_r) &= \frac{1}{2}\left(a\frac{1}{2}\left(bB_r + (-1)^r B_r b\right) - (-1)^{r+1}\frac{1}{2}\left(bB_r + (-1)^r B_r b\right)a\right) \\
&= \frac{1}{4}\left(baB_r + (-1)^r aB_r b + (-1)^r bB_r a + B_r ba\right), \\
b \wedge (a \cdot B_r) &= \frac{1}{2}\left(b\frac{1}{2}\left(aB_r - (-1)^r B_r a\right) + (-1)^{r-1}\frac{1}{2}\left(aB_r - (-1)^r B_r a\right)b\right) \\
&= \frac{1}{4}\left(baB_r - (-1)^r bB_r a - (-1)^r aB_r b + B_r ab\right),
\end{aligned}$$

from which it is easy to see that

$$\begin{aligned} a\cdot(b\wedge B_r)+b\wedge(a\cdot B_r) &= \frac{1}{4}(ab+ba)B_r+\frac{1}{4}B_r(ba+ab) \\ &= \frac{1}{2}(a\cdot b)B_r+\frac{1}{2}B_r(b\cdot a)=(a\cdot b)B_r. \end{aligned}$$

Similarly, we must note that

$$a\cdot(b\cdot B)=-b\cdot(a\cdot B). \tag{4.6}$$

To see this, we apply equation (4.3) in writing

$$\begin{aligned} a\cdot(b\cdot B_r) &= \frac{1}{2}\left(a\frac{1}{2}\left(bB_r-(-1)^rB_rb\right)-(-1)^{r-1}\frac{1}{2}\left(bB_r-(-1)^rB_rb\right)a\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{4}\left(abB_r-(-1)^raB_rb+(-1)^rbB_ra-B_rba\right), \end{aligned}$$

Then, by substitution, we can immediately write

$$b\cdot(a\cdot B_r)=\frac{1}{4}\left(baB_r-(-1)^rbB_ra+(-1)^raB_rb-B_rab\right).$$

Adding these, we then see that

$$\begin{aligned} a\cdot(b\cdot B)+b\cdot(a\cdot B) &= \frac{1}{4}\left(abB_r+baB_r\right)-\frac{1}{4}\left(B_rba+B_rab\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{4}\left(ab+ba\right)B_r-\frac{1}{4}B_r\left(ba+ab\right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2}(a\cdot b)B_r-\frac{1}{2}B_r(b\cdot a)=0. \end{aligned}$$

Note that we may have arrived at this conclusion sooner had we written

$$a\cdot(b\cdot B_r)=(a\wedge b)\cdot B_r=-(b\wedge a)\cdot B_r=-b\cdot(a\cdot B_r),$$

but the justification for some intermediate steps is not immediately clear.

4.2. Identities Involving Mercers

Letting M_r denote a mercer of rank r having factorization

$$M_r=\prod_{i=1}^r m_i, \tag{4.7}$$

recall that

$$M_r=\sum_{i=1}^r \langle M_r\rangle_i\,,$$

where here we're making use of the angled-brackets notation $\langle\cdot\rangle_i$ which takes the grade i part of what it encloses. (Note that this requires us to visualize the expansion of the enclosure as a sum of blades.) To be more precise, if M_r is a mercer of even rank, (if r is even), then

$$M_r=\sum_{i=0}^{r/2} \langle M_r\rangle_{2i}\,, \tag{4.8}$$

while if M_r is a mercer of odd rank, we have

$$M_r = \sum_{i=1}^{(r+1)/2} \langle M_r \rangle_{2i-1} . \tag{4.9}$$

To see this, consider first the trivial case of $r = 0$; then, for any $r > 0$, the equation

$$M_r = M_{r-1} m_r = \langle M_{r-1} \rangle_1^r \cdot m_r + \langle M_{r-1} \rangle_1^r \wedge m_r + \langle M_{r-1} \rangle_0 m_r . \tag{4.10}$$

Here we have extended our notation $\langle \cdot \rangle_i^j$ to mean a culling of all enclosed blades not of a grade falling in the interval $[i, j]$.

An inductive hypothesis can now be stated that equations (4.8) and (4.9) hold for $r - 1$. If r is even, then, by our inductive hypothesis, M_{r-1}, when expanded as a sum of blades, consists only of blades of odd grade, and it is clear that equation (4.10) becomes (4.8). If r is odd, then, by our inductive hypothesis, M_{r-1}, when expanded as a sum of blades, consists only of blades of even grade, and it is clear that equation (4.10) becomes (4.9).

Notice that we might also have written equation (4.10) as

$$M_r = M_{r-1} m_r = M_{r-1} \cdot m_r + M_{r-1} \wedge m_r - \langle M_r \rangle_0 m_r .$$

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