

How to Find and Prove the Inverse of χ

Fukang Liu¹, Santanu Sarkar², Willi Meier³, Takanori Isobe^{4,5}

¹Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan

²Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India

³FHNW, Windisch, Switzerland

⁴University of Hyogo, Hyogo, Japan

⁵NICT, Tokyo, Japan

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Overview

1 Background

- Definition and Application of χ
- Previous Study on χ^{-1}

2 Our Work

- Motivation and Observations
- Deducing χ_n^{-1}
- Proving χ_n^{-1}

3 Summary

- Conclusion

The χ_n Operation

- Invented by Joan Daemen (Ph.D. thesis)
- Implementation: easy to mask & high performance
- Applications: Keccak, Ascon, Rasta, Subterranean 2.0

Definition 1

For an odd integer $n \geq 3$, the n -bit nonlinear transform $\chi_n : \mathbb{F}_2^n \rightarrow \mathbb{F}_2^n$ is defined as

$$y_i = x_i + \overline{x_{i+1}}x_{i+2}, \quad i \in [0, n-1] \quad (1)$$

where $X = (x_0, \dots, x_{n-1})$ and $Y = (y_0, \dots, y_{n-1})$ are input and output bits, respectively.

The Inverse of χ_n

■ Proof of invertibility: **seed-and-leap** (Daemen's thesis)

■ **Seed:** Find an index j such that $y_{j+1} = 1$. Then, $x_j = y_j$.

■ **Leap:** If x_j is known, x_{j-2} can be found. Since n is an odd number, all $(x_i)_{0 \leq i \leq n-1}$ can be found by repeating this step.

■ Correctness (from an algebraic perspective):

$$y_{j-2} = x_{j-2} + \overline{x_{j-1}}x_j,$$

$$y_{j-1} = x_{j-1} + \overline{x_j}x_{j+1},$$

$$y_j = x_j + \overline{x_{j+1}}x_{j+2},$$

$$y_{j+1} = x_{j+1} + \overline{x_{j+2}}x_{j+3},$$

Seed: $\overline{x_{j+1}} = \overline{x_{j+2}}x_{j+3}$ if $y_{j+1} = 1 \rightarrow \overline{x_{j+1}}x_{j+2} = 0$

The Inverse of χ_n

Degree of χ_n^{-1} : $(n + 1)/2$ (AC 2014¹, Biryukov et al.)

- 1: $(x_0, x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}) \leftarrow (y_0, y_1, \dots, y_{n-1})$
- 2: **for** $0 \leq i < \frac{3(n-1)}{2}$ **do**
- 3: $x_{(n-2)i} \leftarrow x_{(n-2)i} + x_{(n-2)i+2} \cdot \overline{x_{(n-2)i+1}}$
- 4: **end for**
- 5: **return** $(x_0, x_1, \dots, x_{n-1})$

¹Cryptographic Schemes Based on the ASASA Structure: Black-box, White-box, and Public-key

The Inverse of χ_n

A small example for χ_9^{-1} :

$$i = 0 : \quad x_0 = y_0 + y_2\overline{y_1},$$

$$i = 1 : \quad x_7 = y_7 + x_0\overline{y_8},$$

$$i = 2 : \quad x_5 = y_5 + x_7\overline{y_6},$$

$$i = 3 : \quad x_3 = y_3 + x_5\overline{y_4}.$$

Hence, the expression of x_3 in terms of Y is

$$x_3 = y_3 + (y_5 + (y_7 + (y_0 + y_2\overline{y_1})\overline{y_8})\overline{y_6})\overline{y_4}.$$

The Inverse of χ_n

How the algorithm ends for χ_9^{-1} :

$$i = 4 : \quad x_1 = y_1 + x_3 \overline{y_2},$$

$$i = 5 : \quad x_8 = y_8 + x_1 \overline{x_0},$$

$$i = 6 : \quad x_6 = y_6 + x_8 \overline{x_7},$$

$$i = 7 : \quad x_4 = y_4 + x_6 \overline{x_5},$$

$$i = 8 : \quad x_2 = y_2 + x_4 \overline{x_3},$$

$$i = 9 : \quad x_0 = y_0 + x_2 \overline{x_1},$$

$$i = 10 : \quad x_7 = y_7 + x_0 \overline{x_8},$$

$$i = 11 : \quad x_5 = y_5 + x_7 \overline{x_6}.$$

The order to compute (x_0, \dots, x_8) :

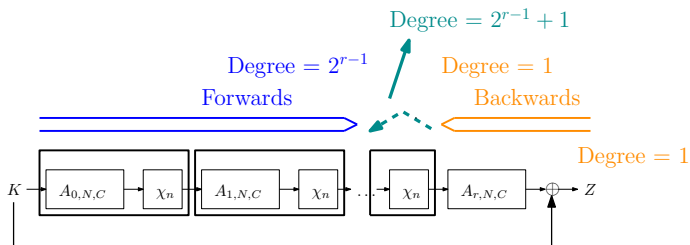
$$x_3 \rightarrow x_1 \rightarrow x_8 \rightarrow x_6 \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow x_7 \rightarrow x_5.$$

The Inverse of χ_n

No explicit formula and the corresponding proof.

Too long to write down? (degree: $(n + 1)/2$)

Motivation



An efficient way to find low-degree equations for r -round Rasta²:

$$P(Y) + \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} x_j L_j(Y) + c = 0,$$

where $Deg(P) \leq 2^{r-1} + 1$, $Deg(L_j) \leq 1$ and $c \in \mathbb{F}_2$ is a constant.

²Algebraic Attacks on Rasta and Dasta Using Low-Degree Equations

Observations

Low-degree equations found via experiments/observations:

$$0 = x_i + \overline{y_{i+1}}x_{i+2} + y_i,$$

$$0 = y_{i+1}(x_i + y_i),$$

$$0 = y_{i+3}(x_i + y_i + y_{i+2}\overline{y_{i+1}}),$$

$$0 = y_{i+5}(x_i + x_{i+2} + y_i + y_{i+1}y_{i+2} + y_{i+1}\overline{y_{i+3}}y_{i+4}),$$

$$0 = y_{i+7}(x_i + y_i + y_{i+6}\overline{y_{i+5}} \overline{y_{i+3}} \overline{y_{i+1}} + y_{i+4}\overline{y_{i+3}} \overline{y_{i+1}} + y_{i+2}\overline{y_{i+1}}).$$

Observation 1

All these 5 polynomials belong to the ideal $\mathcal{I} = \langle f_0, \dots, f_{n-1} \rangle$, where

$$f_i = y_i + x_i + \overline{y_{i+1}}x_{i+2}. \quad (2)$$

Note that $f_i = 0$ is a low-degree equation, i.e. $f_i = 0$ holds for all (X, Y) satisfying $Y = \chi_n(X)$.

More such (linearly independent) polynomials in \mathcal{I} ?

Observations

Why do we need these polynomials?

Note 1

Note that for a polynomial $p_i \in \mathcal{I}$, by definition of an ideal, there must exist polynomials $h_0, \dots, h_{n-1} \in \mathbb{F}_2[X, Y]$ such that

$$p_i = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} h_i f_i$$

and hence $p_i = 0$ holds for all (X, Y) satisfying $Y = \chi_n(X)$.

Especially, if p_i is also of the following form

$$P(Y) + \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} x_j L_j(Y) + c,$$

it can be used for attacks on Rasta.

Initial Idea

Consider $x_i y_{i+j}$ and use the division algorithm to compute the remainder of $x_i y_{i+j} / \langle f_0, \dots, f_{n-1} \rangle$.

- case 1: $j = 2t$.
- case 2: $j = 2t + 1$.

Observations

Small examples (case 2): $i = 0, j = 2t + 1 = 7$

$$x_0y_7 / \langle f_0, f_1, \dots, f_{n-1} \rangle, \quad n \geq 9.$$

The procedure³ is to iteratively compute N_{i+1} and R_i :

$$N_i = Q_i D_i + N_{i+1} + R_i,$$

where

$$N_0 = x_0y_7, \quad D_i \in \{f_0, \dots, f_{n-1}\}, \quad R_i \in \mathbb{F}_2[y_0, y_1, \dots, y_{n-1}].$$

Then, we know $N_0 + \sum_{j=0}^i R_j \in \mathcal{I}$ if finally $N_{i+1} = 0$, i.e. we expect that the remainder will finally be in $\mathbb{F}_2[y_0, y_1, \dots, y_{n-1}]$.

³ N_i : numerator, D_i : divisor, Q_i : quotient, $N_{i+1} + R_i$: remainder

Observations

i	N_i	D_i	Q_i	R_i
0	x_0y_7	$f_0 = x_0 + x_2y_1 + x_2 + y_0$	y_7	y_0y_7
1	$x_2y_1y_7 + x_2y_7$	$f_2 = x_2 + x_4y_3 + x_4 + y_2$	y_1y_7	$y_1y_2y_7$
2	$x_2y_7 + x_4y_1y_3y_7 + x_4y_1y_7$	$f_2 = x_2 + x_4y_3 + x_4 + y_2$	y_7	y_2y_7
3	$x_4y_1y_3y_7 + x_4y_1y_7$ $+x_4y_3y_7 + x_4y_7$	$f_4 = x_4 + x_6y_5 + x_6 + y_4$	$y_1y_3y_7$	$y_1y_3y_4y_7$
4	$x_4y_1y_7 + x_4y_3y_7 + x_4y_7$ $+x_6y_1y_3y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_3y_7$	$f_4 = x_4 + x_6y_5 + x_6 + y_4$	y_1y_7	$y_1y_4y_7$
5	$x_4y_3y_7 + x_4y_7 + x_6y_1y_3y_5y_7$ $+x_6y_1y_3y_7 + x_6y_1y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_7$	$f_4 = x_4 + x_6y_5 + x_6 + y_4$	y_3y_7	$y_3y_4y_7$
6	$x_4y_7 + x_6y_1y_3y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_3y_7$ $+x_6y_1y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_7$ $+x_6y_3y_5y_7 + x_6y_3y_7$	$f_4 = x_4 + x_6y_5 + x_6 + y_4$	y_7	y_4y_7
7	$x_6y_1y_3y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_3y_7$ $+x_6y_1y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_7 + x_6y_3y_5y_7$ $+x_6y_3y_7 + x_6y_5y_7 + x_6y_7$	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	$y_1y_3y_5y_7$	$y_1y_3y_5y_6y_7$

Observations

i	N_i	D_i	Q_i	R_i
8	$x_6y_1y_3y_7$ $+x_6y_1y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_7 + x_6y_3y_5y_7$ $+x_6y_3y_7 + x_6y_5y_7 + x_6y_7$	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	$y_1y_3y_7$	$y_1y_3y_6y_7$
9	$x_6y_1y_5y_7 + x_6y_1y_7 + x_6y_3y_5y_7$ $+x_6y_3y_7 + x_6y_5y_7 + x_6y_7$	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	$y_1y_5y_7$	$y_1y_5y_6y_7$
10	$x_6y_1y_7 + x_6y_3y_5y_7$ $+x_6y_3y_7 + x_6y_5y_7 + x_6y_7$	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	y_1y_7	$y_1y_6y_7$
11	$x_6y_3y_5y_7$ $+x_6y_3y_7 + x_6y_5y_7 + x_6y_7$	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	$y_3y_5y_7$	$y_3y_5y_6y_7$
12	$x_6y_3y_7 + x_6y_5y_7 + x_6y_7$	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	y_3y_7	$y_3y_6y_7$
13	$x_6y_5y_7 + x_6y_7$	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	y_5y_7	$y_5y_6y_7$
14	x_6y_7	$f_6 = x_6 + x_8y_7 + x_8 + y_6$	y_7	y_6y_7
15	0			

Observations

$$\begin{aligned}x_0 y_7 &= y_7 f_0 \\ &+ (y_1 y_7 + y_7) f_2 \\ &+ (y_1 y_3 y_7 + y_1 y_7 + y_3 y_7 + y_7) f_4 \\ &+ (y_1 y_3 y_5 y_7 + y_1 y_3 y_7 + y_1 y_5 y_7 + y_1 y_7 + y_3 y_5 y_7 + y_3 y_7 \\ &+ y_5 y_7 + y_7) f_6 + r_n,\end{aligned}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned}r_n &= y_7 y_0 \\ &= (y_1 y_7 + y_7) y_2 \\ &+ (y_1 y_3 y_7 + y_1 y_7 + y_3 y_7 + y_7) y_4 \\ &+ (y_1 y_3 y_5 y_7 + y_1 y_3 y_7 + y_1 y_5 y_7 \\ &+ y_1 y_7 + y_3 y_5 y_7 + y_3 y_7 + y_5 y_7 + y_7) y_6.\end{aligned}$$

Observations

Small examples (case 1): $i = 1, j = 2t = 4$

$$x_1 y_5 / \langle f_0, f_1, \dots, f_6 \rangle$$

i	N_i	D_i	Q_i	R_i
0	$x_1 y_5$	$f_1 = x_1 + x_3 \bar{y}_2 + y_1$	y_5	$y_1 y_5$
1	$x_3 \bar{y}_2 y_5$	$f_3 = x_3 + x_5 \bar{y}_4 + y_3$	$\bar{y}_2 y_5$	$\bar{y}_2 y_3 y_5$
2	$x_5 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5$	$f_5 = x_5 + x_0 \bar{y}_6 + y_5$	$\bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5$	$\bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5$
3	$x_0 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6$	$f_0 = x_0 + x_2 \bar{y}_1 + y_0$	$\bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6$	$y_0 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6$
4	$x_2 \bar{y}_1 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6$	$f_2 = x_2 + x_4 \bar{y}_3 + y_2$	$\bar{y}_1 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6$	0
5	$x_4 \bar{y}_1 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_3 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6$	$f_4 = x_4 + x_6 \bar{y}_5 + y_4$	$\bar{y}_1 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_3 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6$	0
6	0			

$$\begin{aligned} x_1 y_5 &= y_1 y_5 + \bar{y}_2 y_3 y_5 + \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5 + y_0 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 y_5 \bar{y}_6 \\ &= y_5 (y_1 + \bar{y}_2 y_3 + \bar{y}_4 y_5 + y_0 \bar{y}_2 \bar{y}_4 \bar{y}_6) \end{aligned}$$

Observations

- Studying the remainder of $x_i y_{i+2t+1} / \langle f_0, \dots, f_{n-1} \rangle$ may give us the formula of low-degree equations for Rasta.
- Studying the remainder of $x_i y_{i+2t} / \langle f_0, \dots, f_{n-1} \rangle$ may give us the formula of χ_n^{-1} .

If the formula of χ_n^{-1} is known, we should be able to know what $x_i y_j$ exactly is for any (i, j) .

Lemma 1

For a given pair (i, j) satisfying $i, j \in [0, n - 1]$, if there exist $n + 1$ polynomials $r_{0,i}, \dots, r_{n,i} \in \mathbb{F}_2[y_0, y_2, \dots, y_{n-1}]$ such that

$$x_i y_j = \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} r_{k,i} f_k + r_{n,i},$$

there must exist $n + 1$ polynomials $r_{0,i+1}, \dots, r_{n,i+1} \in \mathbb{F}_2[y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n]$ such that

$$x_{i-2} y_j = \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} r_{k,i+1} f_k + r_{n,i+1}.$$

construct the term $x_{i-2}y_j$:

$$\begin{aligned}
 f_{i-2} &= x_{i-2} + x_i \overline{y_{i-1}} + y_{i-2}, \\
 x_{i-2}y_j &= y_j f_{i-2} + x_i y_j \overline{y_{i-1}} + y_{i-2}y_j, \\
 &= y_j f_{i-2} + \overline{y_{i-1}} \left(\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} r_{k,i} f_k + r_{n,i} \right) + y_{i-2}y_j, \\
 &= (y_j + \overline{y_{i-1}} r_{i-2,i}) f_{i-2} + \sum_{k=0, k \neq i-2}^{n-1} \overline{y_{i-1}} r_{k,i} f_k \\
 &\quad + \overline{y_{i-1}} r_{n,i} + y_{i-2}y_j.
 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, Lemma 1 is proved and we have

$$r_{n,i+1} = \overline{y_{i-1}} r_{n,i} + y_{i-2}y_j.$$

Finding χ_n^{-1}

Let

$$h = (n - 1)/2. \quad (3)$$

Consider

$$x_{i-1}y_i/f_{i-1}. \quad (4)$$

Since

$$f_{i-1} = x_{i-1} + x_{i+1}\bar{y}_i + y_{i-1},$$

we have

$$f_{i-1}y_i = x_{i-1}y_i + y_{i-1}y_i.$$

Finding χ_n^{-1}

Satisfy the condition of Lemma 1:

$$x_{i-1}y_i = x_{i+2h}y_i = y_i f_{i-1} + y_{i-1}y_i.$$

So, the remainder of

$$x_{i+2h-2}y_i, \dots, x_{i+2(h-j)}y_i, \dots, x_{i+2(h-h-t)}y_i = x_{i-2}y_i$$

divided by $\langle f_0, f_1, \dots, f_{n-1} \rangle$ must be polynomials only in Y .

Finding χ_n^{-1}

Let

$$x_{i+2(h-j)}y_i = \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} r_{k,j}f_k + r_{n,j}, j \in [0, h+t]$$

The recursive relation in the Lemma:

$$r_{n,j+1} = \overline{y_{i+2(h-j)-1}}r_{n,j} + y_{i+2(h-j)-2}y_i = \overline{y_{i-2j-2}}r_{n,j} + y_{i-2j-3}y_i$$

where

$$r_{n,0} = y_{i-1}y_i.$$

Finding χ_n^{-1}

■ On the degree of $r_{n,j}$:

■ $Deg(r_{n,0}) = 2, Deg(r_{n,1}) = 3, \dots, Deg(r_{n,j}) = 2 + j$

■ Low-degree equations are found:

$$0 = x_{i+2(h-j)}y_i + r_{n,j} = x_{i-1-2j}y_i + r_{n,j},$$
$$r_{n,j} = (y_{i-1-2j} + \sum_{u=1}^j y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^j \overline{y_{i-2k}})y_i.$$

Finding χ_n^{-1}

$$x_{i-1-2j} y_i = (y_{i-1-2j} + \sum_{u=1}^j y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^j \overline{y_{i-2k}}) y_i.$$

So,

$$x_{i-1-2j} = y_{i-1-2j} + \sum_{u=1}^j y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^j \overline{y_{i-2k}} ???$$

When will the formula become stable ???

Finding χ_n^{-1}

$$x_{i-1-2j} = y_{i-1-2j} + \sum_{u=1}^j y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^j \overline{y_{i-2k}}$$

When $j = (n-1)/2 = h$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} x_{i-1-2h} &= y_{i-1-2h} + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}} \\ \rightarrow x_i &= y_i + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}}. \end{aligned}$$

Finding χ_n^{-1}

$$x_i = y_i + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}}$$

- initial analysis: $Deg(r_{n,j})$ becomes stable when $j \geq h$, i.e. $Deg(r_{n,j}) = h + 1 = (n + 1)/2$ for $j \geq h$.
- this is the inverse of χ_n with a very high probability!

Finding χ_n^{-1}

- Why do we need to prove the correctness?
 - Is the above deduction not tight?

Current Status

We proved that for any (X, Y) satisfying $Y = \chi_n(X)$, there is:

$$x_i y_{i+2t} = \left(y_i + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}} \right) y_{i+2t}. \quad (5)$$

We do not know whether

$$x_i = \left(y_i + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}} \right) \quad (6)$$

will always hold. At least, it is not so obvious.

Proof Idea

Consider two equation systems E_1 and E_2 in terms of (X, Y) :

$$E_1 : y_i = x_i + \overline{x_{i+1}}x_{i+2}, \quad i \in [0, n-1],$$

$$E_2 : x_i = y_i + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}}, \quad i \in [0, n-1].$$

If $V(E_1) = V(E_2)$ where $V(E_1)$ and $V(E_2)$ denotes the set of solutions to E_1 and E_2 , the correctness is proved.

Trivial observations:

- $|V(E_1)| = |V(E_2)| = 2^n$ (size is the same).
- If $V(E_1) = V(E_2)$, the invertibility is also proved.
- If proved, $Deg(\chi_n^{-1}) = h + 1 = (n + 1)/2$.

Proof Idea

A common two-step proof:

- Step 1: prove $V(E_1) \subseteq V(E_2)$
- Step 2: prove $V(E_2) \subseteq V(E_1)$

■ Direct proof: difficult

- introduce another equation system E_3 :

$$E_3 : x_i + y_i + \overline{y_{i+1}}x_{i+2} = 0, \quad i \in [0, n - 1].$$

- our finding: $V(E_1) = V(E_3) \setminus \{1^n, 0^n\}$, i.e. $V(E_1) \subseteq V(E_3)$
- step 2: prove $V(E_2) \subseteq V(E_3)$ due to $\{1^n, 0^n\} \notin V(E_2)$.
- step 1: prove $V(E_1) \subseteq V(E_2)$.

Proving $V(E_2) \subseteq V(E_3)$

For any $(X, Y) \in V(E_2)$, we have

$$x_i = y_i + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}},$$

$$\begin{aligned} x_{i+2} &= y_{i+2} + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2(u-1)+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2(k-1)}} \\ &= y_{i+2} + \sum_{u=0}^{h-1} y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^{h-1} \overline{y_{i-2k}} \end{aligned}$$

Proving $V(E_2) \subseteq V(E_3)$

$$\begin{aligned}x_{i+2}\overline{y_{i+1}} &= y_{i+2}\overline{y_{i+1}} + \overline{y_{i+1}} \sum_{u=0}^{h-1} y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^{h-1} \overline{y_{i-2k}} \\&= y_{i-2h+1}\overline{y_{i-2h}} + \overline{y_{i-2h}} \sum_{u=0}^{h-1} y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^{h-1} \overline{y_{i-2k}} \\&= \sum_{u=0}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}} \\&= y_{i+1} \prod_{k=0}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}} + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}} \\&= x_i + y_i.\end{aligned}$$

* $2h = n - 1 \rightarrow i + 2 = i - 2h + 1 \pmod n, i + 1 = i - 2h \pmod n.$

Proving $V(E_1) \subseteq V(E_2)$

The proof is a bit long. Basically, it is based on the proof by induction and proof by contradiction.

Conclusion

- The formula of χ_n^{-1} is found and can be written down in only one line:

$$x_i = y_i + \sum_{u=1}^h y_{i-2u+1} \prod_{k=u}^h \overline{y_{i-2k}}.$$

- Finding and proving χ_n^{-1} highly relies on the ideal $\mathcal{I} = \langle f_0, \dots, f_{n-1} \rangle$. Underlying reasons? (unclear to me)
- Potential attacks based on this formula?