Ranks of quotients, remainders and $p$-adic digits of matrices

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Abstract

For a prime $p$ and a matrix $A \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$, write $A$ as $A = p(A \text{ quo } p) + (A \text{ rem } p)$ where the remainder and quotient operations are applied element-wise. Write the $p$-adic expansion of $A$ as $A = A^{[0]} + pA^{[1]} + p^2A^{[2]} + \cdots$ where each $A^{[i]} \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$ has entries between $[0, p-1]$. Upper bounds are proven for the $\mathbb{Z}$-ranks of $A \text{ rem } p$ and $A \text{ quo } p$. Also, upper bounds are proven for the $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$-rank of $A^{[i]}$ for all $i \geq 0$ when $p = 2$, and a conjecture is presented for odd primes.

Keywords: Matrix rank, Integer matrix, Remainder and quotient, $p$-Adic expansion.

AMS classification: 15A03, 15B33, 15B36, 11C20.

Outline

This paper presents two related results on integer matrices after applying element-wise division with remainder. First, let $A$ be an $n \times n$ integer matrix with rank $r$ over $\mathbb{Z}$ and rank $r_0$ over $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$. If $n > p^{r_0}$ then Theorem 1 in Section 1 shows that $\operatorname{rank}(A \text{ rem } p) \leq (p^{r_0} - 1)(p + 1)/(2(p - 1))$ and $\operatorname{rank}(A \text{ quo } p) \leq r + (p^{r_0} - 1)(p + 1)/(2(p - 1))$.

The second result is concerned with the $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$-ranks of $p$-adic digits of an integer matrix. Let $U, S, V \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$ such that $U, V$ have entries from $\{0, 1\}$, $\det U \det V \not\equiv 0 \pmod{2}$, $S = \text{diag}(1, \ldots, 1, 0, \ldots, 0)$, $r$ be the rank of $S$ over

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$\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$, and $n \geq 2^r$. If $M = USV \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$, then Theorem 16 in Section 2 shows that rank of $M[i]$ over $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ is $\binom{r}{2^i}$ for all $i \geq 1$. A conjecture is presented in Section 2.3 for the same setup, but for $p$ an odd prime.

A result on integer rank of Latin squares is also obtained. Let $A$ be the integer matrix of rank one formed by the outer product between the vector $(1, 2, \ldots, p-1)$ and its transpose. Then $A \rem p$ is a Latin square on the symbols $\{1, \ldots, p-1\}$. It is shown in Corollary 10 in Section 1.3 that the integer rank of this Latin square is $(p + 1)/2$.

1 Quotient and Remainder Matrices

For any integer $n$ and any prime $p$, let $n \rem p$ and $n \quo p$ denote the (non-negative) remainder and quotient in the Euclidean division $n = qp + r$ where $0 \leq r < p$. The operators $\rem p$ and $\quo p$ are naturally extended to vectors and matrices using element-wise application.

Throughout, we utilize the notion of Smith normal form of an integer matrix. For any matrix $A \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$ of rank $r$, there exist unimodular matrices $U, V \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$ and a unique $n \times n$ integer matrix $S = \text{diag}(s_1, s_2, \ldots, s_n)$ such that $A = USV$. Furthermore, $s_i \mid s_{i+1}$ for all $1 \leq i \leq n$ and $s_i = 0$ for all $r < i \leq n$. $S$ is called the Smith normal form of $A$. For a discussion on existence and uniqueness of Smith normal form, we refer to the reader to the textbook by Newman [3]. We use two notions of ranks. The integer rank of $A \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$ is denoted by $\text{rank}(A)$. The rank of the image of $A$ in the finite field $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$ is denoted by $\text{rank}_p(A)$. Alternatively, if $r = \text{rank}(A)$ and the Smith form of $A$ is $S = \text{diag}(s_1, \ldots, s_r, 0, \ldots, 0)$, then $\text{rank}_p(A) = r_0$ is the maximal index $i$ such that $p \mid s_i$.

Finally, we use the notation $A_{*,j}$ for the $j$th column of $A \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$ and $a_{i,j}$ for the entry $(i,j)$ of $A$.

1.1 Rank Theorem

The following theorem is the main result of Section 1.

Theorem 1. Let $A$ be an $n \times n$ matrix over $\mathbb{Z}$, $r = \text{rank}(A)$, $r_0 = \text{rank}_p(A)$, and assume $n > p^{r_0}$. Then

(i) $\text{rank}(A \rem p) \leq (p^{r_0} - 1)(p + 1)/(2(p - 1))$.

(ii) $\text{rank}(A \quo p) \leq r + (p^{r_0} - 1)(p + 1)/(2(p - 1))$. 

Proof. We will prove part (i) in Lemma 2. For part (ii), we have $A = (A \text{rem } p) + p (A \text{quo } p)$, or $p (A \text{quo } p) = A - (A \text{rem } p)$. For matrices $X = Y + Z$, rank is sub-additive and $\text{rank}(X) \leq \text{rank}(Y) + \text{rank}(Z)$. Scaling a matrix by $p$ or $-1$ does not change its rank. So $\text{rank}(A \text{quo } p) \leq \text{rank}(A) + \text{rank}(A \text{rem } p) = r + \text{rank}(A \text{rem } p)$. □

Lemma 2. $\text{rank}(A \text{rem } p) \leq (p^{r_0} - 1)(p + 1)/(2(p - 1))$.

Proof. Let $A = USV$ be the Smith normal form of $A$, with $S = S_r + pS_q$ where $S_q = S \text{quo } p$ and $S_r = S \text{rem } p$. Then

$$A \text{ rem } p = USV \text{ rem } p = (US_rV + pUS_qV) \text{ rem } p = US_rV \text{ rem } p. \quad (1)$$

If $r_0 = \text{rank}_p(A)$ then $S_r = \text{diag}(\sigma_1, \ldots, \sigma_{r_0}, 0, \ldots, 0)$ where $\sigma_i \in [1, p - 1]$ for all $1 \leq i \leq r_0$. The $j$th column of $A \text{ rem } p$ is

$$A_{\ast,j} \text{ rem } p = \left( \sum_{\ell=1}^{r_0} \sigma_i u_{\ell,j} U_{\ast,\ell} \right) \text{ rem } p = \left( \sum_{\ell=1}^{r_0} c_{\ell,j} U_{\ast,\ell} \right) \text{ rem } p, \quad (2)$$

where $c_{\ell,j} \in [0, p - 1]$. If we only consider the non-zero coefficients $c_{\ell,j}$, then the right-hand side of (2) is an $i$-term sum $(c_{\ell_1,j} U_{\ast,\ell_1} + \ldots + c_{\ell_i,j} U_{\ast,\ell_i}) \text{ rem } p$, where $1 \leq i \leq r_0$ and $1 \leq \ell_1 < \ell_2 < \ldots < \ell_i \leq r_0$. The coefficients $c_{\ell,i,j}$ are elements in $[1, p - 1]$ which are units modulo $p$. In particular, we can factor $c_{\ell_1,j}$ from the sum, and re-write (2) as:

$$A_{\ast,j} \text{ rem } p = (c_{\ell_1,j} (U_{\ast,\ell_1} + \alpha_{\ell_2,j} U_{\ell_2,j} + \ldots + \alpha_{\ell_i,j} U_{\ast,\ell_i})) \text{ rem } p, \quad (3)$$

where $\alpha_{\ell,k,j} \in [1, p - 1]$ for all $k$.

Fix some $i, j$ and some non-zero assignment of $\alpha_{\ell_2,j}, \ldots, \alpha_{\ell_i,j}$ in (3) and let $\tilde{u} = U_{\ast,\ell_1} + \alpha_{\ell_2,j} U_{\ell_2,j} + \ldots + \alpha_{\ell_i,j} U_{\ast,\ell_i}$. Then (3) becomes $A_{\ast,j} \text{ rem } p = (c_{\ell_1,j} \tilde{u}) \text{ rem } p$. There are $p - 1$ possible values for $c_{\ell_1,j}$ and hence the possible values of $A_{\ast,j} \text{ rem } p$ are:

$$\{ \tilde{u} \text{ rem } p, (2\tilde{u}) \text{ rem } p, ((p - 1)\tilde{u}) \text{ rem } p \}. \quad (4)$$

We are interested in getting an upper bound on the rank of this set of vectors. First note that $(xy) \text{ rem } p = (x \text{ rem } p)(y \text{ rem } p) \text{ rem } p$. So $(i\tilde{u}) \text{ rem } p = (i(\tilde{u} \text{ rem } p)) \text{ rem } p$ for $i \in [1, p - 1]$. Hence the maximal rank one can achieve from (4) occurs when (up to permutation) $\tilde{u} \text{ rem } p = (0, 1, 2, \ldots, p - 1, \ldots)$. The rest of the entries are duplicates from the same range $[0, p - 1]$ by the
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pigeonhole principle. Now apply Lemma 3 to conclude that the vectors in \((4)\) have rank at most \((p + 1)/2\).

Thus for each \(i, j\) and non-zero assignment of \(\alpha_{\ell_2,j}, \ldots, \alpha_{\ell_i,j}\), there are at most \((p + 1)/2\) linearly independent columns of \(A \; \text{rem} \; p\). We now count the maximal possible number of distinct \(A_{*,j}\)’s. There are \(\binom{r_0}{i}\) possible ways to select \(i\) different columns from the first \(r_0\) columns of \(U\). For each choice, there are \(i - 1\) coefficients: \(\alpha_{\ell_2,j}, \ldots, \alpha_{\ell_i,j}\), and \((p - 1)^{i-1}\) possible ways to assign their non-zero values from \([1, p - 1]\). Each choice gives a set of vectors as in \((4)\) whose rank is at most \((p + 1)/2\). Summing over all \(i \in [1, r_0]\), the maximal possible rank from the span of columns in \((2)\) is

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{r_0} \binom{r_0}{i} (p - i)^{i-1} \frac{p + 1}{2} = \frac{p^{r_0} - 1}{p - 1} \frac{p + 1}{2},
\]

using the binomial theorem.

\[\square\]

1.2 Remainder of Rank-1 Matrices

In this section we prove the following auxiliary result.

**Lemma 3.** Let \(p\) be any odd prime, \(n \geq p\). Let \(u \in \mathbb{Z}^n\) be any non-zero vector where the entries of \(u \; \text{rem} \; p\) include \(\{1, 2, \ldots, p - 1\}\). Then the set of vectors \(\{u \; \text{rem} \; p, (2u) \; \text{rem} \; p, \ldots, ((p - 1)u) \; \text{rem} \; p\}\) is linearly dependent and has rank \((p + 1)/2\).

First we prove this result for \(n = p - 1\). A generalization follows. Let \(u = (1, 2, \ldots, p - 1) \in \mathbb{Z}^{p-1}\) and \(M \in \mathbb{Z}^{(p-1) \times (p-1)}\) be the rank-1 matrix \(M = uu^T\) and \(R = M \; \text{rem} \; p\).

**Lemma 4.** \(\text{rank}(R) = (p + 1)/2\).

**Proof.** Lemma 5 shows that \((p + 1)/2\) is an upper bound on the rank and Lemma 7 shows that \((p + 1)/2\) is a lower bound. \[\square\]

**Lemma 5.** \(\text{rank}(R) \leq (p + 1)/2\).

**Proof.** Let \(1 \leq j \leq (p - 1)/2\) and \(1 \leq i \leq p - 1\). Write \(ij = qp + r\) where \(0 \leq r < p\). Also \(i, j < p \Rightarrow p \nmid i \land p \nmid j\), which implies \(r \neq 0\). Then \(i(p - j) = (i - q - 1) + (p - r)\) where \(0 < (p - r) < p\). So \(ij \; \text{rem} \; p + i(p - j) \; \text{rem} \; p = r + (p - r) = p\). But \(R_{i,j} = ij \; \text{rem} \; p\), so for all \(1 \leq i \leq (p - 1)/2\) we have \(R_{i,j} = (p, p, \ldots, p)^T - R_{*,p-i}\). Thus there are \((p - 1)/2\) linearly dependent columns, and no more than \((p + 1)/2\) linearly independent columns. \[\square\]
To prove that \((p + 1)/2\) is also a lower bound on the rank, it suffices (using Lemma 5) to consider the matrix \(B\) of size \((p - 1) \times \frac{p+1}{2}\) which is formed by the first \((p - 1)/2\) columns of \(R\) and the column \(B*_{(p+1)/2} = R*_{(p+1)/2} + R*_{(p-1)/2} = (p, \ldots, p)^T\). The matrix \(B\) has the following structure:

\[
B = \begin{bmatrix}
1 & 2 & \cdots & \frac{p-1}{2} & \ p \\
2 & 4 & \cdots & p-1 & \ p \\
3 & 6 \text{ rem } p & \cdots & 3\frac{p-1}{2} \text{ rem } p & \ p \\
\vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & \vdots \\
(p - 1) \text{ rem } p & 2(p - 1) \text{ rem } p & \cdots & (\frac{p-1}{2})^2 \text{ rem } p & \ p
\end{bmatrix}
\]

**Lemma 6.** Either the right kernel of \(B\) is empty, or the first \((p - 1)/2\) columns of \(B\) are linearly dependent.

**Proof.** If the right kernel of \(B\) is not empty, then there exists \((p+1)/2\) integers \(c_1, \ldots, c_{(p+1)/2}\) not identically zero, such that

\[
c_1 B*_{1} + c_2 B*_{2} + \ldots + c_{(p+1)/2} B*_{(p+1)/2} = 0. \tag{6}
\]

Apply this linear combination simultaneously to the first two rows of \(B\) to get

\[
c_1 + 2c_2 + \ldots + c_{(p-1)/2} \ (p - 1)/2 = -c_{(p+1)/2} \ p \\
2c_1 + 4c_2 + \ldots + c_{(p-1)/2} \ (p - 1) = -c_{(p+1)/2} \ p \tag{7}
\]

But (7) implies either a contradiction in (8): the right kernel of \(B\) is empty, or \(c_{(p+1)/2} = 0\) and the first \((p - 1)/2\) columns of \(B\) are linearly dependent. \(\square\)

**Lemma 7.** \((p + 1)/2 \leq \text{rank}(R)\).

**Proof.** Using Lemma 6, proving a lower bound on the rank of \(R\) can be reduced to showing that the first \((p - 1)/2\) columns of \(B\) are linearly independent. We use induction. Consider the sequence of matrices \(B^{(k)}\) formed by the first \(k\) columns of \(B\), where \(2 \leq k \leq (p - 1)/2\). The base case of induction, \(B^{(2)}\), has rank 2 which is straightforward to verify. For the inductive case, we assume \(B^{(k-1)}\) has rank \(k - 1\), and use Lemma 9 to deduce that \(B^{(k)}\) has rank \(k\). \(\square\)

The following lemma is needed before proving Lemma 9.

**Lemma 8.** For all \(j \geq 1\), \((3j \text{ rem } p) - 3j = -pq\) for some integer \(q \geq 0\).
Proof. Write $3j$ as $3j = qp + r$ where $r = 3j \; \text{rem} \; p$ and $q = 3j \; \text{quo} \; p$. Then $r - 3j = -qp$. \hfill \Box$

**Lemma 9.** Let $B^{(k)}$ be the $(p - 1) \times k$ integer matrix in proof of Lemma 7. Either $B^{(k)}$ has column rank $k$, or $B^{(k-1)}$ is rank deficient.

**Proof.** If the right kernel of $B^{(k)}$ was not empty, then there exists integers $c_1, \ldots, c_k$ not identically zero, such that

$$
\begin{bmatrix}
1 & 2 & \cdots & k \\
2 & 4 & \cdots & 2k \\
3 & 6 \; \text{rem} \; p & \cdots & (3k) \; \text{rem} \; p \\
\vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\
3 & 6 \; \text{rem} \; p & \cdots & (3k) \; \text{rem} \; p \\
\vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
c_1 \\
\vdots \\
c_k \\
\end{bmatrix}
= 
\begin{bmatrix}
0 \\
\vdots \\
0 \\
\end{bmatrix}.
$$

(9)

We then perform the following row operations on the left-hand side of (9): replace (row 3) by (row 3) $- 3 \times$ (row 1), then divide row 3 by $-p$. From Lemma 8 we have that row 3 is now

$$
\begin{bmatrix}
0 & \cdots & 0 & 1 & \cdots & 1 & 2 & \cdots & q \\
\end{bmatrix},
$$

for some $q$ (in fact, $q = (3k) \; \text{quo} \; p$). We then perform the following column operations: let $\ell$ denote the column index where the first 1 appears in row 3 ($\ell$ is guaranteed to be greater than or equal 1 since for all $p > 3$, $k \leq (p-1)/2$, we have $3k > p$.) Pivot on entry $\ell$ in row 3 and eliminate all entries of row 3 with indices between $\ell + 1$ and $k - 1$. Subtract $q - 1$ multiples of column $\ell$ from column $k$. Then pivot on entry $k$ of row 3 and subtract column $k$ from column $\ell$. Effectively, this sequence of operations transforms row 3 into:

$$
\begin{bmatrix}
0 & \cdots & 0 & 1 \\
\end{bmatrix}.
$$

The right-hand side of (9) is zero, and hence not effected by the aforementioned elementary operations.

Finally, the transformed row 3 implies either that $c_k$ is zero, or the existence of $c_1, \ldots, c_k$ is contradictory. This proves the statement of the lemma. \hfill \Box

We are now ready to generalize Lemma 4 and prove Lemma 3.

**Proof of Lemma 3.** For the column vector $u \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times 1}$, consider the matrix $\hat{R} \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n} = uu^T \; \text{rem} \; p$, which is analogous to the matrix $R$ of Lemma 4.
The image of \( u \text{ rem } p \) has entries from the interval \([0, p-1]\). If \( n > p \) then, by the pigeonhole principle, the vector \( u \text{ rem } p \) will contain duplicate (and zero) entries, which correspond to duplicate and zero rows in \( \hat{R} \). So up to row/column permutations, \( \hat{R} \) contains \( R \) as a submatrix, and the extra rows/columns are duplicate and/or zero. Hence \( \text{rank}(\hat{R}) = \text{rank}(R) \).

### 1.3 A Note on Ranks of Latin Squares

It is worth noting that Lemma 4 also implies a result on the ranks of Latin squares of certain orders. As before, let \( p \) be an odd prime, and let \( R \) be the \((p-1) \times (p-1)\) integer matrix whose \((i, j)\)th entry is \( ij \text{ rem } p \). We show that \( R \) is a Latin square as follows. \( R \) is the Cayley multiplication table of the finite field \( \mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z} \), excluding the element 0. Since \( \mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z} \) is an integral domain, we have \( ij \text{ rem } p \neq ij' \text{ rem } p \) whenever \( j \neq j' \) (where \( i, j, j' \in [1, p-1] \)). So every row/column of \( R \) has the residues \([1, \ldots, p-1]\) appearing only once, and \( R \) is a Latin square of order \( p-1 \). \( R \) has rank 1 over \( \mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z} \) and non-trivial rank over \( \mathbb{Z} \) by Lemma 4 as stated in the following corollary.

**Corollary 10.** Let \( p \) be any odd prime, and let \( R \) be any Latin square of order \( p-1 \) on the symbols \( \{1, \ldots, p-1\} \). Then the integer rank of \( R \), taken as a \((p-1) \times (p-1)\) integer matrix, is \((p+1)/2\).

### 2 \( p \)-adic Matrices

We now switch the focus to ranks of \( p \)-adic matrices. Ranks in this section are over the finite field with \( p \) elements with residue classes \([0, 1, \ldots, p-1]\). For any prime \( p \) and any matrix \( M \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n} \) with entries \(|m_{i,j}| < \beta \), the \( p \)-adic expansion of \( M \) is \( M = M^{[0]} + pM^{[1]} + \ldots + p^sM^{[s]} \) where the entries of each matrix \( M^{[i]} \) are between \([0, p-1]\), and \( s \leq \lceil \log_p \beta \rceil \). We call \( M^{[i]} \) the \( i \)th \( p \)-adic matrix digit of \( M \). We extend the superscript \([i]\) notation to vectors and integers in the obvious way.

We present results concerning the 2-adic matrix digits. For odd primes, we only present a conjecture. It is an open question to study the combinatorial structure of the column space of the \( p \)-adic matrix digits for primes other than 2.

*The two ranks, over \( \mathbb{Z} \) and over \( \mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z} \), are equal unless \( p \) is an elementary divisor of the matrix.*
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Figure 1: An example of $A$ (left) and $M = AA^T$ (right), where $r = 4$. The rows of $A$ are partitioned by the number of non-zero entries in each row. The corresponding blocks in the symmetric matrix $M$ are shown with borders. The column partitions of $M$ are $m_0, m_1, m_2, m_3, m_4$. And $\text{rank}_p(M^{[0]}) = \text{rank}_p(m_1^{[0]}) = 4$, $\text{rank}_p(M^{[1]}) = \text{rank}_p(m_2^{[1]}) = 6$, $\text{rank}_p(M^{[2]}) = \text{rank}_p(m_4^{[2]}) = 1$.

### 2.1 Binary code matrices

Fix $p = 2$. The goal of this section is to show that for all $i \geq 1$, $\text{rank}_p(M^{[i]}) = \binom{r}{i}$ where $M = AA^T$ for some specially constructed $A$, which we call binary code matrix. We will generalize the construction of $M$ in a subsequent section. For now, $A$ is constructed as follows. Start with the $2^r \times r$ matrix whose $i,j$ entry is the $j$th bit in the binary expansion of $i$. Then apply row permutations to $A$ such that the first $\binom{r}{0}$ rows have exactly 0 non-zero entries, followed by $\binom{r}{1}$ rows which have exactly 1 non-zero entries, followed by $\binom{r}{2}$ rows which have exactly 2 non-zero entries and so on. See Figure 2.1 for an example where $r = 4$. 
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The $\ell$th column of $M$ is given by:

$$M_{\ast,\ell} = a_{1,\ell}A_{\ast,1} + \ldots + a_{r,\ell}A_{\ast,r} = \sum_{j \in J_\ell} A_{\ast,j}, \quad (10)$$

where $J_\ell \subseteq \{1, 2, \ldots, r\}$ and the second equality holds because $a_{i,\ell} \in \{0, 1\}$. We call $J_\ell$ the summing index set of $M_{\ast,\ell}$. Let $m_k$ denote the $2^r \times \binom{r}{k}$ submatrix of $M$, which includes all columns of the form: $M_{\ast,\ell} = \sum_{j \in J_\ell} A_{\ast,j}$ where $J_\ell \subseteq \{1, 2, \ldots, r\}$ and $|J_\ell| = k$. Then the columns of $M$ can be partitioned into:

$$M = \begin{bmatrix} m_0 & m_1 & m_2 & \ldots & m_{2^i} & m_{2^i+1} & \ldots & m_r \end{bmatrix}. \quad (11)$$

The next lemma shows that

$$M^{[i]} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & \ldots & 0 & m^{[i]}_{2^i} & m^{[i]}_{2^i+1} & \ldots & m^{[i]}_r \end{bmatrix}. \quad (12)$$

**Lemma 11.** If $k < 2^i$, then $m^{[i]}_k = 0$ for all $i \geq 1$.

**Proof.** Columns of $m_k$ are given by $\sum_{j \in J} A_{\ast,j}$ where $|J| = k$. The entries of $A$ are either 0 or 1. So the largest entry in $m_k$ is $1 + \ldots + 1 = k$. The result follows by appealing to the binary expansion of $k$. \qed

We expect $\text{rank}_p(m^{[i]}_{2^i}) \leq \binom{r}{2^i}$ since $m^{[i]}_{2^i}$ is a matrix of dimension $2^r \times \binom{r}{2^i}$. The next lemma shows that the rank is, in fact, equal to this upper bound.

**Lemma 12.** $\text{rank}_p(m^{[i]}_{2^i}) = \binom{r}{2^i}$ for all $i \geq 1$.

**Proof.** Let $c_1, \ldots, c_{\binom{r}{2^i}}$ be the column indices of $m^{[i]}_{2^i}$ in $M$. Let $S(m^{[i]}_{2^i})$ be the $\binom{r}{2^i} \times \binom{r}{2^i}$ submatrix of $m^{[i]}_{2^i}$ formed by the rows $c_1, \ldots, c_{\binom{r}{2^i}}$, and $S(A)$ be the $\binom{r}{2^i} \times r$ submatrix of $A$ formed by the rows $c_1, \ldots, c_{\binom{r}{2^i}}$. Rows of $S(A)$ have exactly $2^i$ non-zero entries because of the construction of $A$. If we treat $A$ and $M$ as block matrices then $S(m^{[i]}_{2^i}) = S(A)S(A)^T$ is the $2^i$th diagonal block of $M$ (See Figure 2.1).

The entries in row $\rho$ of $S(m^{[i]}_{2^i})$ are given by linear combinations of the entries in row $\rho$ of $S(A)$. The summing index sets $J_j$, where $|J_j| = 2^i$, are exactly the locations of the non-zero entries of rows of $S(A)$, which are all different by construction. Hence there is only one entry in row $\rho$ of $S(m^{[i]}_{2^i})$ whose summing set matches the locations of the non-zero entries in row $\rho$ of
S(A). The value of this entry is 1 + 1 + \ldots + 1 = 2^i. The other entries have values less than 2^i. Now appeal to the binary expansion of 2^i to get that S(m_{2i}^{[i]}) is an identity (sub)matrix\[^{†}\] of m_{2i}^{[i]} whose size is \( \binom{r}{2i} \) × \( \binom{r}{2i} \). Therefore, m_{2i}^{[i]} has rank \( \binom{r}{2i} \).

Next we will prove that \text{rank}_{p}(M^{[i]}) = \binom{r}{2i}\[^{†}\] by showing that all the columns of m_{2i+1}^{[i]}, m_{2i+2}^{[i]}, \ldots, m_{2i}^{[i]} are linearly dependent on those of m_{2i}^{[i]}.

**Lemma 13.** Consider any column \( m \) in \( m_{2^i+z}^{[i]} \), where \( z \geq 1 \). Then \( m^{[i]} \) is a linear combination of columns of \( m_{2i}^{[i]} \).

**Proof.** Let \( J \) be the summing index set of \( m \), where \( |J| = 2^i + z \). Let \( \mathcal{I} \) be the set of all subsets of \( J \) of size \( 2^i \), so \( |\mathcal{I}| = \binom{2^i+z}{2^i} \). For every \( I \in \mathcal{I} \), there is a unique corresponding column \( c_I \) in \( m_{2i} \), whose summing set is \( I \). We will show that \( m^{[i]} \) can be obtained by adding up \( c_I \)'s. In other words,

\[
m^{[i]} \equiv \sum_{I \in \mathcal{I}} c_I^{[i]} \pmod{2}.
\]

(13)

Let \( A_J \) denote the submatrix of \( A \) formed by the columns indexed by \( J \). For any row \( \rho \) of \( A_J \), let \( 2^i + k_\rho \) be the number of 1's in that row, where \( -2^i \leq k_\rho \leq z \). First, if \( k_\rho < 0 \), then the corresponding sum of 1's at this row is less than \( 2^i \). By Lemma 11, we have the corresponding entries in both \( m_{2i}^{[i]} \) and \( m_{2i+z}^{[i]} \) are zeros and (13) trivially holds. On the other hand, if \( 0 \leq k_\rho \leq z \), then the \( \rho \)th entry of the right-hand side of (13) is \( 1 + 1 + \ldots + 1 \equiv \binom{2^i+k_\rho}{2^i} \) (mod 2) since \( |\mathcal{I}| = \binom{2^i+k_\rho}{2^i} \). (Recall that the number of non-zero entries in row \( \rho \) is \( 2^i + k_\rho \) rather than \( 2^i + z \).) The \( \rho \)th entry of the left-hand side of (13) is \( (2^i + k_\rho) \) quo \( 2^i \). The \( (2^i + k_\rho) \) term corresponds to adding \( (2^i + k_\rho) \) non-zero entries, and the quo \( 2^i \) operation corresponds to the \( i \)th bit of the binary expansion of \( m \). By Lemma 15 (below), we have \( (2^i + k_\rho) \) quo \( 2^i \equiv \binom{2^i+k_\rho}{2^i} \) (mod 2), and (13) holds. \[\square\]

The proof of the next (auxiliary) lemma uses a theorem due to Kummer [2].

\[^{†}\]This is true in the example of Figure 2.1 without any reordering, because we constructed the row blocks of \( A \) such that the binary expansion of \( i \) comes after the binary expansion of \( j \) whenever \( i > j \). Without such ordering, the identity block assertion holds up to row and column permutations.
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Fact 14 (Kummer’s Theorem). The exact power of \( p \) dividing \( \binom{a+b}{a} \) is equal to the number of carries when performing the addition of \( (a+b) \) written in base \( p \).

A corollary of Kummer’s theorem is that \( \binom{a+b}{a} \) is odd (resp. even) if adding \( (a+b) \) written in binary expansion generates no (resp. some) carries.

Lemma 15. \((2^i+k) \, \text{quo} \, 2^i \equiv \binom{2^i+k}{2^i} \pmod{2}\).

Proof. We will show that \((2^i+k) \, \text{quo} \, 2^i \) and \(\binom{2^i+k}{2^i}\) have the same parity. Write \(k = Q2^i + R\) for a quotient \(Q \geq 0\) and a remainder \(0 \leq R < 2^i\).

There are two cases for \(Q\). If \(Q\) is even, then the \(i\)th bit of \(k\) is 0 and hence no carries are generated when adding \(k\) and \(2^i\) in base 2. So by Kummer’s Theorem, \(\binom{2^i+k}{2^i}\) is odd and \(\binom{2^i+k}{2^i} \equiv 1 \pmod{2}\). If \(Q\) is odd, then the \(i\)th bit of \(k\) is 1 and the number of carries generated when adding \(2^i+k\) in base 2 is at least 1. So by Kummer’s theorem \(\binom{2^i+k}{2^i}\) is even and \(\binom{2^i+k}{2^i} \equiv 0 \pmod{2}\).

We have shown that \(\binom{2^i+k}{2^i}\) and \(Q\) have opposite parities. Now, substitute \(k = Q2^i + R\) to get \(2^i + k \, \text{quo} \, 2^i = Q + 1\). Hence, modulo 2, \((2^i+k) \, \text{quo} \, 2^i\) also have an opposite parity to that of \(Q\). This concludes our proof. \(\square\)

2.2 Non-symmetric Matrices

So far we have shown that \(\text{rank}_p(M[i]) = \text{rank}_p(m[i]) = \binom{r}{2^i}\), where \(M = AA^T\) for some specially constructed \(A\). We now put the results together into a more general theorem.

Theorem 16. Assume \(U, S, V \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}\), such that \(U, V\) have entries from \(\{0, 1\}\), \(\det U \det V \neq 0 \pmod{2}\), \(S = \text{diag}(1, \ldots, 1, 0, \ldots, 0)\), \(\text{rank}_p(S) = r\), and \(n \geq 2^r\). If \(M = USV \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}\), then \(\text{rank}_p(M[i]) = \binom{r}{2^i}\) for all \(i \geq 1\).

Proof. Since \(S = SS\), we have \(M = USV = USSV = LR\), where \(L = US \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times r}\), and \(R = SV \in \mathbb{Z}^{r \times n}\). Let \(A \in \mathbb{Z}^{2^r \times r}\) be the binary code matrix of the digits \(\{0, \ldots, 2^r-1\}\). Consider the matrices \(\hat{L} = A\), \(\hat{R} = A^T\) and \(\hat{M} = \hat{L}\hat{R}\).

If we start with \(\hat{L}\) (resp. \(\hat{R}\)) and augment it with the appropriate \((n-2^r)\) additional rows (resp. columns), and apply the appropriate row and column permutations, then we could transform \(\hat{L}\) into \(L\) (resp. \(\hat{R}\) into \(R\)), and in effect, transform \(\hat{M}\) into \(M\). Our goal is to show that the rank arguments of the previous lemmas hold under the aforementioned operations.

---

\(^1\)i.e. the coefficient of \(2^i\) in the binary expansion of \(k\).
We first note that row and column permutations preserve ranks. Also, by a simple enumeration argument over the binary tuples of size \( r \), and by the given fact that \( n \geq 2^r \), we can conclude that any additional rows (resp. columns) augmented to \( \hat{L} \) (resp. \( \hat{R} \)) will be linearly dependent. In fact, any such rows (resp. columns) will be duplicates of existing rows (resp. columns).

Now, consider adding extra columns to \( \hat{R} \). The resulting extra columns in \( \hat{M} \) are duplicates of existing columns and hence the ranks in Lemma 12 are not affected. Finally, adding extra rows to \( \hat{L} \) does not change the cardinality of the summing index sets in (10). The rest of the results are straightforward to verify.

2.3 Odd Primes

For \( p = 2 \), the non-zero patterns of the binary code matrix \( A \) coincides with the summing indices in (10). This is not true for odd primes, where the linear combinations can have coefficients other than 0 and 1. Thus it is an open question to devise construction a similar to binary code matrices, which exposes the combinatorial structure of the column space of \( M = AA^T \).

However, we present the following conjecture towards understanding the \( p \)-adic ranks for odd primes.

**Conjecture 17.** Assume \( p = 2k + 1 \) is an odd prime, \( U, S, V \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n} \) such that \( U, V \) have entries from \([0, p-1]\), \( \det U \det V \not\equiv 0 \pmod p \), \( S \) is a \( 0, 1 \) diagonal matrix and \( \text{rank}_p(S) = r \). Let \( M = USV = M^{[0]} + M^{[1]}p + \cdots \) where \( M^{[i]} \in (\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z})^{n \times n} \). It is conjectured that

\[
\text{rank}_p(M^{[1]}) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{k} \left( \binom{r + 2i}{2i + 1} + \binom{r + 2k - 1}{2k} \right) - 2r \quad (14)
\]

Furthermore, in the generic case where the entries of \( U, V \) are uniformly chosen at random from \([0, p-1]\), and \( n \) is arbitrarily large, the ranks are equal to the stated bound.

This conjecture first appeared in [1]. It shows that a product of matrices with “small” entries and “small” rank can still have very large rank, but not full, \( p \)-adic expansion. In other words, the “carries” from the product \( USV \) will impact many digits in the expanded product.
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Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank Andrew Arnold, Kevin Hare, David McKinnon, Jason Peasgood, and B. David Saunders.

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